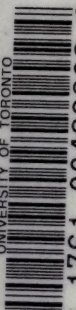


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CHIEF AND TRIBUNE
PARNELL AND DAVITT

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CHIEF AND TRIBUNE PARNELL AND DAVITT

BY

M. M. O'HARA

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M. M. O'NEILL

MANUEL M. O'NEILL
TORONTO AND LONDON

1918

PREFACE

THE period of Irish history dealt with in this book is little more than twenty years long, but it includes a great national agitation, an agrarian revolution of immense importance, enduring gains for the Irish people, and two men of almost stupendous significance, whether we consider them from the Irish or the English standpoint. Parnell and Davitt—Chief and Tribune—are, to a great extent, the history of Ireland for the period involved. Neither can now suffer except through misrepresentation, whether it take the form of indiscriminate eulogy or unreasoning invective. It would be false to claim that I have approached the subject free from all possible prejudices and prepossessions, but I have endeavoured to be impartial, to avoid all exaggeration, to be accurate in the presentation of facts, and scrupulously fair in commenting upon them. Both Parnell and Davitt were keen critics of men, and would expect no preferential treatment from history.

It cannot but be interesting to re-examine and bring up to date our knowledge of the careers of the two men chiefly accountable for the creation of the most powerful and successful constitutional agitation in Irish history since the Union. Especially to-day is it interesting and important to do so. The great issue which Parnell was believed to have solved finally has been re-opened. Both Parnell and Davitt are being appealed to daily by the protagonists in the raging

struggle. I have hopes that my book, while treating of a bygone time, may help to throw light on some of the political problems and controversies of the present.

I received help, which I wish to acknowledge, from the late Mr. James Collins, one of Davitt's most intimate friends, but unfortunately his death deprived me of ever-ready and invaluable assistance. Mr. J. J. O'Neill, the Librarian of University College, Dublin, also helped me greatly, and I desire to own here my debt to him. I have deliberately adopted the plan of placing the two lives—Parnell's and Davitt's—in juxtaposition, believing that by that method it is possible to convey more distinctly the intimate identification of both men with the events through which they passed together and upon which they impressed so powerfully their commanding personalities.

I think I can claim that this is the first time a complete chronological narrative of Parnell's life has been brought within the compass of a single book. I have been able to incorporate some incidents which, as far as I know, have not seen the light hitherto; and to accumulate, as the basis of my analysis and criticism, such an assemblage of facts as others, who have worked on the subject, did not command.

M. M. O'HARA.

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CHIEF AND TRIBUNE

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL OF PARNELL.

THE drama of Parnell begins on April 22, 1875, when he took his seat in the House of Commons, and ends on October 6, 1891, when he died. Sixteen years; but they were more crowded than many a century. Besides, there are a prologue and an epilogue of no small importance in themselves. Charles Stewart Parnell was born on June 17, 1846. Mr. T. P. O'Connor heard him say he thought he was born at Brighton, but I prefer to follow Mr. Barry O'Brien's statement—that Avondale, on the edge of the beautiful Vale of Ovoca, was, in fact, his birthplace. Avondale had come to the family by the will of a barrister named Samuel Hayes, a friend of one of Parnell's ancestors. Charles was one of eleven children born to John Henry Parnell and Delia Tudor, daughter of Commodore Charles Stewart, of the United States Navy. His ancestry was illustrious on both sides. On his father's side it carried him with honour through some of the most famous episodes in Irish history, and on his mother's side into the regions of adventure and war.

The Parnells came originally from Cheshire. They were Cromwellians. So, too, were the Emmets. The settlers planted in Ireland by the Great Protector were sometimes the worst investments for England. Parnell's people were of the English garrison in Ireland, whom Provost Mahaffy has described with more truth than delicacy as "splendid mongrels." One of the family was the poet Thomas Parnell, who mixed in the brilliant company which had that grim giant Swift for its pivot. He knew Pope and Bolingbroke well, and his verses are still read. The death of his wife, a woman of rare beauty, whom he loved ardently, broke his spirit, and caused him fits of profound depression, which even the solace of literature was unable to relieve. Sir John Parnell, the poet's grand-nephew, was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish Parliament, when that bigoted but brilliant assembly was at its zenith. His career is wrapped up in the imperishable history of Grattan's Parliament. He

is one of its ornaments : one of that immortal band whose integrity and patriotism almost redeemed it from its sordid treachery. He would not listen to the temptings of Pitt, He accepted dismissal from the Chancellorship rather than support the iniquitous policy of Union. He it was who, when Castlereagh shouted " Rebellion, treason," in answer to Grattan's assertion that the nation would yet recover its liberty, exclaimed prophetically : " No ; for we shall recover our rights by constitutional means." Sir John died almost with the passing of the Irish Parliament. His son Henry, who became the first Lord Congleton, stood by his father's side in the fight against the Bill of Union.

In the English Parliament he was a distinguished figure. He supported the Catholic claims, and carried on the traditions of Irish patriotism till the coming of O'Connell. It is interesting to note that it was on his motion, in November, 1830, that the Ministry of the Great Duke of Wellington was driven from office. It is additionally interesting that he was made Secretary for War, but could not pull with his colleagues, and lost his office on a point of honour. He would not vote for paying the dividend on a certain Russian-Dutch loan " contrary to treaty stipulations." Curiously enough, he left his Irish seat, Maryborough, which he had represented for many years, and for the remainder of his parliamentary life sat for the town of Dundee. He published a history of the Penal Laws, which has been described as the best book on the subject. He died, alas, by his own hand, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. His brother William, to whom Sir John left Avondale, was also a political author. He wrote " An Enquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontent," amongst the causes specified being the Union. He was a good man and a keen reader, but he had no ambition for a public career. One would like him if only for his friendship with Tom Moore, who wrote " The Meeting of the Waters " while his guest at Avondale. Even in William Parnell's day there was controversy about " Moore's Tree " at Ovoca, and in witty style, quite characteristic of him, he implored the bard to settle all doubts in favour of a spot in the Abbey Churchyard, by telling a fib for an old friend in verse if he could not bring himself to lie in prose. But Moore, garrulous as he could be when he liked, elected to play the sphinx. William sat in Parliament for Wicklow, but it was the least noteworthy incident in his life. He was Charles Stewart Parnell's grandfather.

John Henry, father of the future Irish leader, was also a good and kind man, an expert in agriculture, a just and con-

siderate landlord, and deservedly popular with his neighbours. But he had little or no history of his own. His son told with pride that his father had been captain of the Eton Eleven. These are the salient features of the house of the Parnells on the paternal side. Law, poetry, politics, and patriotism blossomed plentifully and wholesomely on the family tree. There are few finer pedigrees in Ireland.

On the maternal side there were high adventure, courage, chivalry, danger and strife. John Henry Parnell, while visiting America in 1834, fell in love with Miss Delia Tudor Stewart, daughter of the famous Commodore, who brought a British frigate into New York Harbour as a wedding present for his bride. That young lady was Delia Tudor, daughter of Judge Tudor, of Boston, who fought for America in the War of Independence. Stewart himself was the son of Ulster emigrants who, like so many others, were driven out of Ireland by landlord tyranny in the 18th century. His career was fiery and triumphant. He was a daring, dashing seaman, whose feats in the war of 1812 and the following years made him one of America's national heroes, and he was known as "Old Ironsides" to the day of his death. He lived until long after the Civil War. Charles Parnell surely sprang from mighty loins.

An ancestry so illustrious and honourable cannot be ignored, for in truth it sheds more light upon him than those stories of childhood and youth which the curious and loving industry of his followers and biographers has unearthed. There is, for instance, the story of the game of war with his sister Fanny, in which Charlie had glued his soldiers to the floor, so that they defied all efforts to disperse them. And that other, of how one day he made his sister Anna's case his own, and kept her nurse at bay with a stout stick. It has always been a foible of worshippers to attach significance to such incidents in the childhood of their heroes. It is an amiable if useless habit, and is accountable for some of the most delightful and unreliable pages of biography. The most trivial and common-place incidents become prophetic when viewed by admiring eyes in the light of great achievement. It is more to the point to note that Charles was a quarrelsome child; that he formed strong likes and dislikes; developed a pity for the suffering, was fond of animals, and grew into a shy, silent, distant, and somewhat aggressive boy. He had brown eyes, and was like his mother. She was not a bit surprised when, later on in life, he was credited with hatred of the English. With these same English he was early thrown into contact. When he was six years old, his father-

brought him across the Channel, and left him at a boarding school for girls in the beautiful county of Somerset. Why England was selected, why indeed the boy was sent from home so soon has, as far as I know, never been explained. Mr. Parnell told the mistress of the school he was anxious Charlie should spend some of his earlier years in England in charge of some one who "would mother him," and cure his stammering. The incident is a curious example of the aloofness and unconcern with which the Irish gentry were accustomed to treat their offspring.

The following year the youngster had an attack of typhoid, during which the devoted schoolmistress watched over him night and day. He became her special favourite, and no ties are more lasting and genuine than those formed in the sick room. But he made no other friend at Yeovil. He was easy to teach, but so shy that his companions never got close to him. He returned home after two years to Avondale, where he first had a governess and then a tutor, neither of whom could make him amenable to discipline. He was again exiled to Derbyshire and Oxfordshire. Both schools were kept by clergymen, and at both he disliked his comrades, and was disliked in turn. He was growing into an idle, headstrong, self-opinionated lad. "I expect the Lexicon is wrong," he said one day when Liddel and Scott were invoked to convince him of an error. He took kindly to cricket, and was plucky, but even such universal passports did not win him popularity at school. His ability and sharpness of intellect were recognised by his teachers. Mathematics alone held his attention in the study hall. His brother John, still living, was with him at the school in Oxfordshire, and, curiously enough, his popularity with the boys was in marked contrast with the chilly view they took of Charles. He was subject to nervous attacks about this time and throughout his life. He suffered greatly from loneliness, and walked in his sleep.

In July, 1865, when he was nineteen, he went up to Cambridge, where his father had been before him, and entered as a pensioner at Magdalen. He was lodged under the Pepysian Library, but "the nearer the Church the farther from God." His university career was not distinguished. His tutor was warned by Mrs. Parnell that the new undergraduate was a somnambulist, and a servant was directed to sleep in an adjoining room, but Parnell discovered the precaution, resented it, and had the servant removed. Mathematics remained his sole academical accomplishment. He did not take a degree. Cambridge holds but few legends of his residence within her walls, and these are typical of

undergraduate life in all countries, and at all ages. There is no period of life which makes greater demands on the charity of silence, yet, were it withheld, some of the most glorious escutcheons would be blurred out of all recognition. It is true the amazing candour of one of his nearest relatives has resurrected a somewhat lurid incident. Strangers are likely to be kinder to a wayward passion athwart the threshold of manhood. Otherwise his escapades were such as every generation of old boys look back upon with the queerest mixture of shyness and brag. One night with three friends he was returning to college after imbibing somewhat too freely. Parnell and another sat down by the roadside, while the others went off for a fly. Two men passing behind the tipsy college boys poked their noses into the affair. Parnell's companion resented their attentions. One of the intruders was stated to have replied in coarse language. Parnell struck at but missed him. The blow was returned, and Parnell felled his man. The second stranger came to the rescue, but Parnell promptly knocked him to the ground. He could not have been much the worse for liquor, seeing that he dealt with the busybodies so effectively. It was alleged that he kicked one of the strangers, but this was denied, and indeed there does not seem any reason to believe it. A police constable corroborated Parnell's statement that he was sober. It is only right to say that Hamilton, the man who complained of the assault, averred that in the first instance he only sought to see if he could be of any assistance to the undergraduates. As long as undergraduates get tipsy, and uncouth benevolence comes to their rescue, such misunderstandings are occasionally bound to befall. At any rate, Parnell was sued in the county court. His counsel admitted some fault, but pleaded for nominal damages. The jury mulcted him in the sum of twenty guineas, and probably the only parties really aggrieved were the jurors—compelled to reconstitute a scene which, in all probability, the principals themselves remembered none too accurately. Of course, the college authorities had to punish Parnell. He was sent down for the remainder of the term, which, in fact, meant only a fortnight, and that is perhaps the best indication of the heinousness of his offence. But Parnell never saw Cambridge again. He had been at the University about three years and a half. He was twenty-three years of age when he returned to Ireland, with an unpromising future.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLUNGE INTO POLITICS.

GLADSTONE'S first Government went to the country in February, 1874. While the General Election was in full swing, Parnell dined in Dublin one evening with Mrs. Dickenson, his sister. The conversation turned naturally on the events of the moment. Captain Dickenson, apparently for want of something better to say, asked him why he did not go into Parliament—why he did not stand for Wicklow. "I will," said Parnell, "whom ought I to see?" Dickenson was for putting off business till the morrow. "The great thing," he observed, "is that you have decided to stand." Parnell would have no delay. "I will see about it at once," he said; "I have made up my mind, and I won't wait." His brother John suggested that he should see Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, of the *Freeman's Journal*. It was 11 o'clock at night. The two brothers rose from the table, left the house, sought the *Freeman* office in Prince's Street, Dublin, and found Gray. At election times the editor of a great daily newspaper receives many strange apparitions in his sanctum. Never it is safe to say has editor had a stranger and more portentous visitor. Yet the business on hand was quite in the day's work. "I have come to say, Mr. Gray," said Parnell, "that I mean to stand for Wicklow as a Home Ruler." Thus did the future leader announce his plunge into politics.

The conversation at Dickenson's was not, however, as abrupt and accidental as it seems. The plunge was not taken on the spur of the moment. It is quite evident Parnell had been brooding over the subject. Probably election rumours had been long and constantly in the air. The Ministry had been in office since 1868, and was getting very near the end of its tether. At any rate, Parnell had spoken with his brother John on the subject some time in 1873. John Parnell, just like Captain Dickenson later on, asked Charles why he did not go into Parliament. But he did more: he presented the suggestion in the very way in which it was likely to be attractive to the practical mind of his brother. He pointed out the freedom of his circumstances, the fact that he represented the family, and that it was his duty to take an interest in public affairs. Besides, he said the Parnells were always mixed up with politics, and con-

cluded by giving him a programme : " Go in and help the tenants, and join the Home Rulers." The reply throws a flood of light on the temperament and character and habits of mind Parnell had reached by his twenty-seventh year. " I do not see my way," he said. " I am in favour of the tenants and of Home Rule, but I do not know any of the men who are working the movement." " Go and see them," said John. " That is what I don't quite see," was the reply. " I must look around for myself first ; I must see a little more how things are going on ; I must make out my own way. The whole question is English dominion. That is what is to be dealt with, and I do not know what the men in these movements intend." He then turned the subject with the sly suggestion that John himself was the head of the family, and had better take his own advice. It will be observed that Parnell used the plural to describe the popular cause at the moment. It was, indeed, not easy to comprehend " these movements " or some, at least, of those associated with them.

It was now five years since he left Cambridge, in a disgrace which the dons decreed a fortnight's rustication to purge. Meanwhile he had joined the militia, captained the county cricket team, paid a visit to America, and fallen in love. As to joining the militia, it was the usual thing for younger sons of Parnell's class to do when they did not go direct to the regular army. There is a portrait of him as a lieutenant of militia. It shows him tall, thin, with scarcely a hair upon his face, round cheeks—" a typical young Englishman of the aristocratic class," says one of his biographers. His sword is said to have been seized by the police, who searched his mother's house in Temple Street, Dublin, during the Fenian times. Mrs. Parnell was, indeed, an intense Fenian partisan. Her politics had always been aggressive. She annoyed one of her son's English teachers by the vehemence of her views about " English Government in Ireland." The gentleman listened with astonishment to her treason, and voted her " one of the most extraordinary women " he had ever seen. She is supposed to have harboured some of the Fenians on the run. Her house was watched by detectives, and, as has been said, searched. Her daughter left the house and passed the night at one of the city hotels, and the sword of the young Wicklow militiaman was the only incriminating evidence seized by the sleuth-hounds of Dublin Castle. Lieutenant Parnell was highly indignant : " Damn their impudence in taking my sword," he exclaimed ; " but I shall make them give it back precious

soon. Perhaps one day I will give the police something better to do than turning my sister into the street. I call it an outrage on the part of the government of this country." He was getting on.

The execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien at Manchester helped him further. These three men are destined to live in Irish history as the Manchester Martyrs. The story of their tragedy has been told as often as the story of Emmet. It would be hard to tell which is more popular amongst the Nationalists of Ireland. In 1867 two Fenian leaders were arrested in Manchester. The Irish of that city, indeed all over the North of England, were steeped to the lips in Fenianism. It was resolved to rescue the prisoners. A clever plan was rapidly arranged. The prison van in which they were being brought from the courthouse to Belle Vue Prison was attacked, and the rescue effected. Unfortunately, Police-Sergeant Brett was shot in the *mélee*. He was seated within the van, an unusual arrangement, and held the keys. As he would not hand them out, one of the rescuers placed a revolver to the key-hole to blow open the lock.

Unfortunately, Sergeant Brett chanced to have his eye to the key-hole at the fatal moment, and he fell, shot through the brain. Some prisoners within the van handed out the keys through an air grating, the Fenian leaders emerged, and were never recaptured. Five men were arrested and placed on trial for the killing of Brett. They got probably as fair a trial as the excited and embittered state of English opinion against the audacious and rebellious Irish would permit, and under such circumstances it is necessary to be thankful for even the semblance of justice. But in truth, the authorities themselves discredited the entire proceedings. Only one man, whoever he was, could have fired the fatal shot, and beyond all manner of doubt it was fired with a far other intention than that of taking human life. A police constable swore at the trial that Allen fired to knock off the lock. The evidence of identification was such that the Crown could not stand by it. All the prisoners were found guilty, and sentenced to death, but only three of them—"the Martyred Three"—were sent to the scaffold. It was felt, and of such crude policies, intended either for their assuagement or subjugation, the people are the best judges, that the hanging of the Irishmen was merely a sacrifice of blood to the vengeance of the English. It is half a century since the tragedy. Great changes have taken place in both countries, a better knowledge on both sides has dispelled many prejudices, but

there can be little doubt that the English were intensely hostile to the Irish at that period.

Allen, Larkin and O'Brien are still honoured in Ireland, and the words which sprang to their lips in the dock at Manchester have become an Irish National Anthem. Mr. John Bright, who sometimes seemed afraid to be too just, said of the tragedy nine years later : "I believe that the three men were hanged because it was a political offence, and not because it was an ordinary murder of one man, committed by one man, and by one shot. I believe it was a great mistake." Such mistakes are the most useless political crimes. A great wave of passionate, though impotent, sorrow surged along the ranks of Irish Nationalism. It has taken a whole generation of remedial legislation, and the prolonged misfortunes and friendship of one of the great English parties to allay that wave. The obscure youths who perished became great National heroes, and did more for the Irish National cause than all the leaders since O'Connell. So true is it that the blood of its martyrs is the life of a good cause.

Young Parnell felt the indignation of the time. "It was no murder," he said. It is supposed that the executions at Manchester first and finally fixed him on the side of the masses of his fellow-countrymen. They probably rekindled in his mind the memory of tales of the Insurrection of 1798, which he had heard from the people around Avondale. The suppression of the Insurrection is an undying infamy. It was carried out with a remorseless brutality for which there are few parallels in history. Orange hordes and Hessian mercenaries were loosed upon the peasantry in an orgy of ingenious cruelty, which sickens the soul even at this distance of time, and Parnell's ears were made early familiar with some of the worst episodes of that fearful epoch.

A weird feeling had been growing within him that the Irish were despised. It was the effect these injustices had upon him. He rebelled inwardly against it. Such brooding bodes no good to tyrants. Nor does it seem to have been merely a feeling of resentment. Already he had nebulous ideas of revenge. In 1871 he went to America to visit John Parnell, who had settled in the States. One day after a call upon a State Governor he surprised his brother by saying : "You see, that fellow despises us because we are Irish. But the Irish can make themselves felt everywhere if they are self-reliant, and stick to each other. Just think of that fellow," he went on scornfully ; "where has he come from ? And yet he despises the Irish." Another time he was heard to say that if the Irish only knew their powers they could

make themselves felt in America and everywhere else. That was the healthy basis upon which he was founding his political philosophy. In it we have the key to his whole political life and policy. He himself realised the power of the Irish. It was his end and aim to make them realise it too. With the realisation of power would come its use, and from its use must spring their triumph.

He fell in love while in America. He met at Newport a young lady of Rhode Island. He wooed her and prospered in his suit. There was an engagement, but no marriage. Many years after he told a colleague that he had been jilted; but he met the lady again when he returned to America in 1879. She subsequently married another, but it has been said her married life was not happy.

With his brother he came home from America in 1872, and devoted himself to the usual country sports and the management of his property. It was a tall, shy, slim, healthy, handsome young fellow of eight and twenty who announced his candidature for Wicklow at the beginning of 1874. But he was High Sheriff of the county, and this proved an insuperable obstacle. So John Parnell stood instead, and the future leader's first political speech, of which it is almost needless to say, there is no record, was delivered in Rathdrum in support of John's candidature. "He mounted a cart or a barrel and made a speech." That is John's laconic account of the historic occasion. Being sheriff he ought not to have taken sides in the election. He could not, however, have done much harm, except perhaps to his own side, for he was then a poor speaker, and in any case he observed quite blandly it would suit him perfectly to be turned out of the office of sheriff. John Parnell was at the bottom of the poll.

The General Election passed. Disraeli, the most successful and accomplished mountebank in British politics, became Premier, and Colonel Taylor, one of the members for the County of Dublin, having accepted the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, had to present himself for re-election. By this time Parnell had formally joined the Home Rule League, and he determined to oppose Taylor. No Home Ruler had the slightest chance of winning County Dublin at the time, so utterly out of touch with realities were our representative institutions forty years ago. But he was a Protestant and a landlord, a brand plucked from the burning, and in that sense a triumph in himself. It is true that he was almost unknown in Home Rule circles, and in any event he was not likely to impress favourably politicians on the look-out for desirable recruits. He was strangely silent and

backward. His political education had only too evidently been neglected. Above all, he was woefully strange to the public platform. He did not seem to have impressed anyone except Butt. The old man saw something promising in the youngster. "My dear boy," he exclaimed to Mr. Barry O'Brien, in his own glowing, genial way, "we have got a splendid recruit, an historic name, my friend, young Parnell, of Wicklow; and, unless I am mistaken, the Saxon will find him an ugly customer, though he is a good-looking fellow." All the other politicians who met him wrote him down a nice, gentlemanly, hopelessly ignorant young fellow.

CHAPTER III.

THE POLITICAL DEBUT.

HE had to get the approval of the Home Rule Council, and it will be readily agreed that that body had little to go upon. John Martin, the veteran patriot of '48, settled the question. Someone asked was Parnell likely to go straight. "If he gives his word," replied the veteran, "I will trust him. I would trust any of the Parnells." Martin evidently believed that breeding counts in politics. Upon this, the Council admitted the aspirant. Mr. A. M. Sullivan saw him for the first time. He liked him on the view, and it was arranged that Parnell should make his *début* at a public meeting in the Rotunda, destined to be the scene of some of the most memorable incidents of his life. He did so, but his best friend would not have pronounced the experiment a success. He fumbled and mumbled, stammered and stumbled, until, pale with nervous confusion, he excited the pity of his audience. An Irish meeting is always tactful on such painful occasions. He was cheered and encouraged, but everybody was immensely relieved when he sat down—an unmitigated failure. But he was good enough for a contest that could not possibly be won. Even his English accent could be tolerated on so hopeless an errand.

He issued an election address, and also a repudiation of a charge which the Tories, of all men, had brought against him—that he had treated his tenants harshly. His brother Henry had had some difference with his tenants, and probably the contest would not have been considered complete without a *suggestio falsi*, for which there was such a plausible foundation. The election is most interesting to the bio-

grapher because of a letter which the parish priest of Rathdrum was generous enough to publish. "His coolness, sound judgment, great prudence and moderation, as well as capacity as a practical man," so ran the recommendation, "will be a great acquisition to the National Party should he be returned for the County of Dublin." The good priest was not alone in his admiration of Parnell as a man of sound judgment. His brother magistrates of Wicklow always deferred to his opinion, and were accustomed to adjourn any knotty point if he chanced to be absent from the bench. Throughout his life those who knew him best always spoke most highly of him. His neighbours held him in affection. His servants loved him. He never quite lost in their eyes the ingenuousness and simplicity of a boy.

Later in life there were ingrates who did not hesitate to impugn his financial integrity. He got £300 from the Home Rule League to fight the contest. The election cost him £2,000, and he handed back the £300 to the League. Taylor disposed of his inarticulate opponent with ridiculous ease; and just to show what a hopeless case was Parnell, and what a hopeless task he had set himself, two trivial incidents may be mentioned. Very late one night he entered the office of the *Dublin Daily Express*, in Parliament Street, and sought an interview with the sub-editor, but when that gentleman came along the unknown visitor had the very greatest difficulty in explaining that he merely wanted to have his election address inserted as an advertisement in the paper, which at that time was the leading Protestant and Tory paper in Ireland. "I could not help in later years," wrote the journalist, "contrasting the diffidence of Mr. Parnell on that occasion with his fluency of speech and his dictatorial manner when he had acquired greater self-confidence." During the election campaign, such as it was, a meeting in support of Parnell was arranged to be held one Saturday evening at Terenure, just beyond the city. A handful of people put in an appearance, and with the promoters of the meeting, assembled at a platform in a field by the side of the road. Time passed. The candidate had not proved a draw. The people had no votes, and very probably did not in any case believe in the affair. The Rev. Professor Galbraith, of Trinity College, a Protestant Home Ruler, thereupon addressed the diminutive demonstration, explaining that Parnell had found himself unable to attend. It is certainly excusable for a nervous candidate to shirk such an electoral frost as prevailed on this occasion, and that Parnell shirked it there can be no doubt, for one of the journalists present when leaving the scene

perceived him on a car behind the boundary hedge judiciously evading the *fiasco*. One may be sure that Professor Galbraith proved fully equal to squaring the truth with the electoral exigencies of the moment. These were experiences chilling enough to damp the ardour of any budding politician, but Parnell was not daunted.

The only addition he tacked on to his Home Rule commitments during the contest was a promise—made, strangely enough, to Mr. T. W. Russell—to vote for the Sunday Closing Bill, so that he went on to his next political venture more untrammelled than most candidates for Parliamentary honours.

When he returned to Avondale after the declaration of the poll he was in high spirits, and as jubilant as if he had won. "Well, boys," he shouted, "I am beaten, but they are not done with me yet!" He always found his tongue when he stepped on his native heath. The driver who took him up from the railway station described with zest how Parnell had filled the journey with talk of fighting again, and smashing them all. For a year he was lost to the public eye. He had become interested in mining, believed there was great mineral wealth in Avondale, and often studied the subject, and experimented for days together. Almost to the end of his life this was one of his most imperious hobbies.

We next find him, in 1875, subscribing £25 towards the election expenses of John Mitchel in Tipperary, and in the same year John Martin, who to all intents and purposes had been young Parnell's political sponsor, died, leaving a vacancy in the representation of County Meath. There was talk of inviting Sir Charles Gavan Duffy to stand for the seat, but, and it serves to show the internal difficulties of the new Home Rule movement, he would not join the League or adopt its novel formula. Parnell, therefore, became the official Home Rule candidate. He was opposed by a Tory and by an Independent Home Ruler, and was placed at the head of the poll. His return delighted the populace. He was carried shoulder high through the ancient town of Trim, and delivered a few words of thanks in the Market Square, which was ablaze with bonfires. The poll was declared on April 19, 1875, and on April 22 he sat in the House of Commons for the first time. He had chanced upon a memorable and historic night, which left its mark upon the whole future of the British legislature.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT.

PARNELL was fortunate in the moment at which he arrived in Irish politics. The circumstances that already existed were favourable to him, and though he could not then foresee it, political conditions were destined to shape themselves soon even more strongly to his advantage. He emerged from obscurity when the movement for Self-Government had assumed an unique feature. Hitherto it was almost entirely in the possession of the Catholic Nationalists. Those Protestants who had identified themselves with the agitation for Irish rights were, for the most part, extremists, who became more Nationalist than the Nationalists themselves. Mitchel was not a bad sample of the class. He knew no moderation where the relations of England and Ireland were concerned. He boldly proclaimed an unconquerable distrust of the Sister Isle. He was permeated with an invincible race hatred. So thoroughly anti-English did he believe himself to be that one is astonished to find him tolerating even Shakespeare, and it is amusing to watch how eagerly he parades Falstaff before his readers, as if he would press the bard himself into his service in humbling the pride of the Anglo-Saxon. Nor is it less amusing to note that the inspiration of his style and the dictation of his very phraseology came from Thomas Carlyle, who had few soft corners in his heart for the Irish people. Mitchel was essentially narrow, and had all the violence and virulence of the narrow man. He took the side of the South in the American Civil War, and that of itself is a trenchant comment on his conception of liberty. His political faith was summed up in the formula that Ireland could not prosper until the last link binding her to England had been severed; and his frame of mind is excellently illustrated by his declaration that he would if he could fling the fires of hell into the face of the enemy of his country.

The Protestant Nationalists of Ireland before 1870 were mostly of the type of Mitchel. Even so amiable a representative of the class as Thomas Davis only favoured compromise for the sake of the unity of the nation. We can easily discern from his ballads that his sense of expediency, perhaps I should say Irish expediency alone, prevented him from promulgating a political creed after Mitchel's own heart. But a very dif-

ferent type of Protestant had now attached himself to the Self-Government side. Gladstone had attacked the Protestant Church Establishment in Ireland. The lucrative intimacy between that Church and the State had been guaranteed by the Act of Union. Indeed, it is not by any means unlikely that Irish Protestant Unionists regarded that provision as perhaps the most important in the entire nefarious Act, and it is certain that a great number of them looked upon the disestablishment of their Church as a vital infraction of Pitt's arrangement. The case against the Establishment was overwhelming. The incubus upon the Irish nation was a gross scandal, and one would have imagined that many a thoughtful Protestant would have considered it a degradation of his religion. But, beyond a doubt, the prevalent feeling in the Irish Protestant Church was that the Establishment was the formal recognition and legal sanction of Protestant ascendancy, and that the Irish Church Act was the death-knell of that ascendancy. What good was the Union with Protestant ascendancy gone? A wave of resentment, of unreasoning revenge, arose in the Protestant community. Threats filled the air. We have witnessed precisely similar episodes in more recent times. If England cast them out, they would cast off their allegiance to England. If the Church were disestablished and the Act of Union repealed piecemeal, they would hasten the process. If English parties were to make a sport of them at the bidding of Irish agitation, they would themselves become Irish agitators, with whom English parties would have to reckon seriously. It was all like the manœuvre of a spoiled child, and, to a very great extent, passed away like the ebullitions of the child. Irish Protestant politicians like Colonel King-Harman became Nationalists, but when some new toy chased away the memory of the lost one their petulance evaporated, and they took up their old political intimacies with redoubled fervour. Not all, however, of the Protestants who became Home Rulers in the middle of the indignation were entirely actuated by such puerile motives or proved thus agile in the political rebound. A fair muster of Protestant Home Rulers held together, and what had originated in a moment of irritation became with them a genuine conviction. Besides, a Protestant of more than ordinary ability led the new party and movement. Lifelong Nationalists, all the Catholic Home Rulers of the country, beheld themselves suddenly joined by supporters from the most unexpected quarter. The "Garrison" had split, and some of its divisions had attached themselves to the popular cause. It is not easy to exaggerate the effect of

this epidemic of Protestant patriotism on the National movement.

It was at this moment that Parnell arrived. The Irish people had just seen the Ascendancy party humbled by statute, and they had witnessed their revolt to their side of an influential section of that party. It was evident that those very enemies from whom they might expect the most bitter opposition were not irrevocably committed to the support of alien rule. It was a valuable revelation. It was a brand new movement in Irish political agitation, somewhat bizarre and bewildering, but it constituted Parnell's opportunity, and upon it he grafted a novel idea which almost immediately captivated the masses of the people. Whether he had a definite plan in his mind when he entered political life may very well be doubted. It has been said very often that his reading had been of the most meagre kind, and his acquaintance with Irish history sparse and fragmentary. Michael Davitt, who knew him well during some of the most important years of his life, did not subscribe to that opinion. On the contrary, he respected Parnell's equipment in this regard. That he had ever been a close and methodical reader of history or general literature is not at all likely. I have myself heard him make the saddest mess of so familiar a passage as Portia's plea for mercy. He discussed Mr. William O'Brien's recently published novel, "When We Were Boys," with a friend of mine, and the most illuminating criticism he had to bestow upon it was that he did not think young fellows at college behaved as Mr. O'Brien made them. In the course of a speech, having made Erin "first flower of the earth and first emerald of the sea," he insisted that his version was better than the outraged poet's. But there is abundant evidence that he knew all the Irish history that was likely to be of practical use to him sufficiently well, and he was intimate with the story of the Rebellion, as it lived on the lips of the people amongst whom he was born. One thing seems certain. His original intentions were purely political. He developed into a great agrarian agitator, but he may be said to have only met the Land Question on the road to Home Rule. In any event, his political plans, if at the beginning he had any worthy of the name, were probably of a vague and tentative nature. It was not until he was actually in the arena that he began to see his way at all clearly, but that he had certainly and irrevocably dedicated himself to the popular side there can be no question.

It is not likely he could have foreseen that he would soon chafe under the leadership of the genial and pliant Butt.

That Butt was both genial and pliant, without a trace of acerbity in his nature, was to Parnell's advantage, too. The evils and inefficiency of the constitutional agitation, as it had been pursued till then, became more and more apparent as English statesmen and politicians played upon the attractive weaknesses of the old man. Parnell resented with an almost amusing keenness the ceremonious indignities to which Butt's efforts were subjected. He distrusted the Egyptian. He felt in himself the buffeting of his compatriot, all the more so as Butt did not appear equal to the feeling of revenge. The young Wicklow squire saw at once that the old leader was working along wrong lines, and set about investigating the Parliamentary machine with a view to its mastery. A Cork member named Ronayne about this time had whispered into the ear of Joe Bigger the idea of Parliamentary obstruction, and Bigger had tried it, with some astonishing results, but in a clumsy way, which had provoked English irritation out of all proportion to the merits or demerits of Bigger or his hindrance of the Parliamentary routine. It was Parnell's hour. He saw the whole splendour of the scheme, detected the faults in Bigger's method, perceived the weak and the strong points of obstruction, knew as if by instinct the pitfalls it contained, and how they could be avoided, and definitely conceived the plan by which Parliament could be reduced to impotence and ridicule, and compelled to annihilate Ireland's representation or listen to her case.

This was, indeed, Parnell's great discovery. He did not invent obstruction, it is true; but in his hands it became a finished and perfect weapon. But Parnell was wise enough not to exaggerate the worth of his instrument. His vision was pre-eminently practical. He was no creature of imagination. He had a firm hold on realities. Even unexpected successes did not mislead his judgment. He knew how far he could go with safety. He knew how far he wanted to go. He knew how far obstruction could help him. That Parliament had a remedy in its own hands he understood well enough; but he was quite conscious of the fact that if he played his game with the requisite astuteness, Parliament would have to surrender, or cease to be the Parliament of Peel and Bright, of Disraeli, and of Gladstone's early years and middle age. He held in his hand for the time being the whole destiny of the British Legislature. When he had done with it, either Ireland would occupy its attention inordinately and practically dominate its existence, or Parliament would have to forget much of its history and traditions and recast

its entire procedure. It is impossible that he did not even foresee that both these results would actually occur, as they did. Parnell was the very embodiment of Nemesis in the House of Commons. That House had treated Ireland with rank injustice and with a deliberate indifference and neglect, which were worse than injustice. It had shelved all remedial projects that came from Irish popular sources. It had emptied when Irish members rose to speak. It had played false with Irish votes. It had cajoled and coaxed and corrupted the Irish representation. Irish Coercion Acts alone stirred interest within its walls. Even after the new Home Rule movement, with its Protestant adherents, had been launched, and Butt, a master of eloquence, and an advocate of unrivalled power, had marshalled his party on the floor of the House, the House went on its bad old way as if unconscious of their presence. Irish members had been bought up so often that Englishmen could see no menace on the Irish benches.

The night Parnell took his seat Joseph Bigger, the member for Cavan, without indeed appreciating the importance of what he did, made his first formidable attempt to obstruct the House. No more remarkable coincidence can be imagined than that it should also have been the first Parliamentary debate at which Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P., assisted. But meanwhile another remarkable Irishman had arrived to manhood and his mission, and while the new member for Meath was accustoming his eyes to the green benches at Westminster was picking oakum not very far away in the prison at Dartmoor.

CHAPTER V.

THE ARRIVAL OF DAVITT.

MICHAEL DAVITT was born on March 25th, 1846, the same year as Charles Stewart Parnell. There must have been vengeance in the heavens that year. Fate was hard to Davitt from his birth. No biography is so drenched with tears as his, and yet withal he lived to have his triumphs and to impress his personality indelibly on the history of his race. His early years have been rescued for us by his sister, Sabina, and her account is so piteously beautiful and thrilling, so instinct with the tragedy of the theme, that I venture to rescue it from the old American newspaper in which it has hitherto lain.

“Michael Davitt’s parents were married in Straide, County Mayo, Ireland, and Michael was nearly seven years of age when his parents were evicted, for failure to pay six months’ rent.

“The family consisted of father and mother, Mary, Michael and Ann—an infant of five days’ old—when they were thrown on the roadside to starve.

“Father John M’Hugh, the parish priest, who had married my parents, could not bear to see my mother and her infant on the roadside; so he made my father move his family into a new barn he had built, but had not used, and there the family took shelter until something better could be provided.

“A few days later my father, Martin Davitt, went to England, to try to get something to do so as to provide for his family.

“He had a good education, but was of a very quiet disposition, and positions such as he could fill were not easily secured in those days without influential friends; and often wearily going from town to town, with very little money and no encouragement, he fell ill, and was in an English hospital nine months, unable to leave his bed or help his family.

“My mother went to work in the fields for her day’s pay, spinning flax and wool at night for whoever wanted such, and by hard work for long hours managed to save enough to send for my father to come back to Ireland.

“Eighteen months later the whole family emigrated to Lancashire, England, and settled in a little town called Haslingden. There my father fell ill again, as he had not entirely recovered from the effects of his former illness; and my mother, who was then under thirty, supported herself and family by the labour of her hands, never asking or receiving a meal in charity in all her life, either for herself or for us, as she would rather die than beg.

“It has been printed in a Philadelphia paper (and I know it was kindly meant) that my mother ‘begged the streets of Manchester with Michael in her arms.’ My mother never lived one day in Manchester, nor ever anywhere while in England but in Haslingden. The family sailed for the United States in the year 1870. My sister, the late Mrs. Padden, had preceded us in 1865, to join her husband. In justice to the memory of my mother, I make this statement, as she lies buried in Philadelphia, and those who knew her independent nature can testify to the truth of my statement.

“Father Thomas Martin, of County Meath, had been sent

to Haslingden on his first Mission, and as there was neither school nor chapel, and only a few Catholics in the town, my father helped the priest by teaching his little school for nothing.

"My father had secured a position as agent for 'St. Patrick's Mutual and Beneficial Association of Liverpool,' and held it until he resigned to come to this country, in 1870.

"Michael, at the age of nine, was sent to the little parochial school, held in the old attic, where Holy Mass was also celebrated. My father served Mass until Michael was taught to do so.

"Michael, when he was nearly ten years of age, came home one evening throwing his cap on the floor, and announced that he had got work.

"'Mother!' he exclaimed, 'you need not worry any more, as I have got a job at half-a-crown a week!'

"Mother at first was for punishing him, as she thought he had got tired of school, but father said to let him alone, 'for in a couple of weeks he will be glad to go back to his books.'

"In justice to the memory of my parents, I wish to say that they had never asked him to go to work, as my father had intended Michael should get an education.

"Michael was passionately devoted to his mother, and, seeing her worrying about the large doctor's bill that had to be paid, he thought that if he had got work he could keep her from worrying. He got work picking up empty spools in a cotton factory, and the first two weeks of his work the man he worked for drank the five shillings Michael earned but never got.

"Leaving that mill he got a similar job in Stelfoxes Mill, in a little place called Baxenden. There he worked but six weeks, when a brute in human form ordered Michael to tend a machine. Michael knew nothing about machinery, and in a couple of hours later his arm was crushed between two cog-wheels, and ten days after his arm had to be amputated in his own house.

"A letter was published in a New York paper stating that Michael lived in the house with his mother, two years after the amputation, and had never spoken to her in all that time because she had given consent to have his arm cut off! The statement is utterly untrue. My mother never gave consent, and did not know of it for several hours after the amputation. My father had gone for a surgeon—I think Dr. Witford by name—to come and see the boy, and ascertain if the arm could be saved. In my father's absence the doctors who

were attending Michael since the accident came to the house, and telling my mother they wanted to have a thorough examination, asked her to leave them alone with the boy. Becoming suspicious that they did not mean to do right by Michael, she asked Thomas Hartly and Mrs. Madden to stay in and see what they intended doing. They had learned of my father's absence, and came fully prepared, without asking my father's or mother's consent, to amputate the arm. Mrs. Madden, a shrewd old Irishwoman, divining their intention, grabbed the poker, and said she would use it unless they awaited the arrival of my father. He arrived soon after, and the surgeon, examining the arm, gave it as his opinion that Michael would be dead in twenty-four hours unless the arm were amputated. Being assured that Michael could live only on this condition, my father gave his consent.

"Nine days later lockjaw set in, and Michael's life was despaired of. The priest was sent for to give him the last Rites of Holy Church, and when he came my mother threw herself on her knees, and implored him to save her boy. Father Martin replied that he would pray to Our Divine Lord to save him.

"'Twas nine o'clock in the evening, and the good priest actually prayed until seven next morning, when Michael, who in the meantime had not been able to utter a sound, called my mother to him. She was so overjoyed at hearing him speak again, that she threw herself on her knees and promised, in thanksgiving to Our Divine Lord for His mercy, to make a pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, in Ireland, a promise she religiously kept.

"To beguile the time, and help him to forget the pain, she told him of the brutal evictions she had witnessed, and of the rising of '98, and the landing of the French in Killala—which recital so fired his youthful imagination about the wrongs committed by England on Ireland that he didn't want to listen to anything else.

"For months he lay ill, and when at last he was strong enough to go back to school, the priest advised my father to send him to the only good school there was in the town, 'The Wesleyan Academy.' Here he remained, my father paying for his tuition; and as he was the only Irish boy in the school, he often had to 'lick' boys bigger than himself for calling the Pope names and making fun of the Irish.

"Michael had a good, pious mother, who early instilled in his mind our holy religion, and never as boy or man did he forget her teaching. He lived and died a good Catholic.

"Michael was fourteen when he asked and got employ-

ment in the post-office of the town, kept by one of nature's gentlemen, Mr. Cockcroft, who, besides being postmaster, was stationer and printer as well. Here Michael worked as errand boy, bill collector, and 'printer's devil' until he was sixteen, when a vacancy occurring in the post-office as letter-carrier, Mr. Crockcroft, wishing to surprise Michael by promoting him to the vacancy, had Michael examined before three magistrates as to his fitness for the position. He passed the examination, but when the magistrates asked him to take the oath of allegiance to her gracious Majesty Victoria, Michael absolutely refused.

"Needless to say, he did not get the promotion."

That was his first act of rebellion against the throne and sovereign, and he was punished for it, but it were well for Davitt had his subsequent treason entailed similar negative consequences.

One other incident stands out in the record of his childhood in perfect accord with the heroic stature of his whole life and character. Half a century ago England was subject in an extraordinary degree to spasms of "No Popery." The North of England, which has never ceased to be largely Catholic, was especially liable to such paroxysms, for there a large Irish population of Catholics and of Protestants from the North of Ireland kept alive in their exile the unfortunate sectarian bitterness peculiar in their own land to certain well-defined parts of the province of Ulster. In 1868 an Orange firebrand with the ubiquitous name of Murphy spread the No Popery cry throughout Lancashire. His oratory was of the 12th of July order, only more than ordinarily venomous, and his campaign proved almost as destructive as if he were actually leading an army against the outposts of the Church of Rome. English and Orange mobs interpreted Murphy's oratory by resorting to outrage against the Irish and the Catholics. A wave of violent intolerance surged over Rochdale, Oldham, Ashton, and adjacent towns. The homes and chapels of the Irish and the Catholics were attacked and wrecked, and it has been said that even the police authorities viewed the debauch of bigotry with no unsympathetic eye. When it does wink, no eye can wink so obviously as that of the police. At any rate, mob law was in due course extended to Haslingden. Word reached the village that a crowd of infuriated anti-Romanists were marching to attack the Catholic Church and the residence of the priest, a devoted and saintly man named Martin. On the way the mob met some Irish harvestmen, whom they belaboured, and young Davitt at dinner, heard their yells as they went from triumph

to triumph in aggressive assertion of "civil and religious liberty." Davitt was full of the pugnacity of his race. He ran to the church door with an old revolver in his hand, and faced the howling fanatics. Volleys of stones and bricks were hurled round him, but with another young Irish lad he kept the religious rowdies at bay. "Stand back," he shouted; "I will shoot the first man that advances another step." Suiting action to word, he fired once in the air, and, as is not unusual on such occasions, the rascals broke and fled. The church was saved, but all kinds of rumours spread, and threats to lynch Davitt were talked of. He was urged to leave the town, but he stood his ground, and was not molested.

CHAPTER VI.

TREASON FELONY.

MICHAEL DAVITT was one of the most notable men who became connected with the Fenian Brotherhood, but it is not on that account necessary for me to delay with the history of that organisation and movement. It was a revolutionary society, designed to establish a republic in Ireland. It is very questionable if there were ever anything at all approaching a majority of the Irish people in favour of a republican form of government. All the leanings and traditions of the race have been monarchical. It does not seem to have occurred to the Fenian leaders that their project was impossible while the vast mass of Irish Nationalists remained devotedly attached to the Catholic religion, to say nothing at all about Britain's command of the seas. Their excuse for ignoring even considerations of such vital importance is found in the fact that English Governments had done their best to corrupt and coerce constitutionalism out of the political programme of the Irish people. To all intents and purposes they were held violently outside the pale of the constitution. The Irish themselves have never longed for change. Their political inquietudes have been forced upon them by foreign rule. At all events, young and ardent spirits conceived the idea of an Irish Republic. From the English point of view, it was lawless audacity. From the Irish point of view, the case has been stated tersely and sufficiently by one of the Fenians themselves. "It may be asked, after all," he writes, "what did Fenianism do for Ireland?" Here is his reply: "To those who ask the question, I would answer that no honest

effort for liberty has ever been made in vain. If Fenianism did nothing else, it kept alive the tradition and the spirit of freedom among Irishmen, and handed them on to the next generation. In so far as the men who took part in it were unselfish, were white-souled lovers of their country, and prepared to risk life and liberty for their country's sake—and I think with pride of the thousands of such men I knew or know of—then the whole Irish nation was ennobled and lifted up from the mire of serfdom. But it did more than merely make martyrs. Its strength, its spontaneity, and the devotion of its adherents were such that they undoubtedly awakened not merely some alarm but also some sense of justice in England.” If we are to judge from his own statements, it certainly did set Gladstone thinking into the Irish problem, and that was an effect of far-reaching importance in itself. It is probable that the Irish Catholic exiles in England were more generally incorporated in the Fenian Brotherhood than their compatriots at home, but the great numerical strength of the organisation, at both sides of the Atlantic, has never been questioned.

Davitt joined the Republican ranks in the 'sixties. He was mixed up with the abortive raid on Chester Castle in February, 1867, and at the first convention of the Fenian centres of the North of England, after the Manchester executions in November of the same year, he was unanimously elected corresponding secretary and organiser for that part of England. No better proof could be given of the confidence his comrades had learned to repose in him, and it is characteristic of his almost quixotic unselfishness throughout life, that he refused to sanction a financial levy to provide him with a salary. He would not touch the secretarial office if any emoluments whatever were attached to it, and for two years discharged the risky duties of the office without fee or reward. He was then a commercial traveller, and his occupation served to hide the task which his political leaders cast upon him. A daring and intrepid young fellow, nineteen years old, named Arthur Forrester, whose mother, Ellen Forrester, was one of the sweet singers of the *Nation*, under cover of the none too formidable protection of a hawker's licence, carried round revolvers and sold or distributed them to the rank and file of the Fenians. He was, however, well-known to the police for his political opinions and associations, and he had actually been arrested in Dublin at the time of the abortive rising when he was but seventeen years of age. Later on he fought in the French Foreign Legion during the war of 'seventy, and lost his leg in a railway accident. He

soon found that the English police were on his track. Just before Christmas, 1869, he was arrested in Liverpool. His occupation was gone. Michael Davitt was in touch with him at the time of his arrest, at once stepped into his shoes, and continued Forrester's dangerous enterprise, also under cover of a hawkers licence. The Liverpool police possibly had cognisance of the one-armed lad when Forrester was apprehended, and doubtless had him watched in other parts of the country. It is said that he collected some 14,000 rounds of Martini cartridges and 400 Snider rifles.

On May 14th, 1870, when Parnell ought to have been back at Cambridge University, Davitt and a Birmingham gunsmith named John Wilson were arrested at Paddington Station, in London. Davitt had £150 on his person, and Wilson had fifty revolvers. The suggestion of the police—probably quite correct—was that Wilson was about to deliver the weapons to Davitt in exchange for the money. It was such a suggestion that the hawkers licence was optimistically intended to explain. The police set about linking up the transaction with Fenianism. A spy named Corydon was brought on the scene to provide the necessary identification. There was little difficulty in picking out a one-armed man from amongst a batch of men with two arms. Corydon, therefore, completed the chain of evidence.

He swore that Davitt took part in the abortive Fenian raid upon Chester Castle. Davitt asserted that Corydon had never seen him before he went through the form of identifying him in prison, and that, although he had been at Chester, the informer could not have known that fact. In the letter, already quoted, Miss Sabina Davitt adds: "Of his connection with the Fenian movement, I have nothing to say now; only that when, in 1870, the infamous informer John Joseph Corydon was falsely testifying that Michael had attended a meeting of officers in Liverpool, Mr. Cockcroft and son brought their time-books, showing that Michael was at work on the day mentioned, nearly one hundred miles away, in the printing office at Haslingden. Yet the false testimony of a paid informer was taken before honest testimony by two respectable Englishmen."

Davitt was a Fenian; when arrested, he was engaged in procuring arms for Fenian purposes; he was guilty of the offence laid to his charge. But that his conviction was unjust and improper because procured by perjury there is little or no doubt. Lovers of justice, those who have the best interests of law and order at heart must therefore denounce the process of his condemnation as an outrage incomparably

greater, even from an English point of view, than the sedition for which he was imprisoned. An unfair and dishonest trial, and a conviction secured by false evidence are an assault on the safety and liberty of every citizen, and jeopardise the elementary rights of the subject. It was the frequent repetition of such official crimes in the courts of justice that undermined all respect for law and the forms of law in Ireland, and that made the administration of justice a by-word and disgrace in that country. Better far for a community that a guilty person should go free than that his conviction be obtained by perjured testimony or by an undue straining of the processes of trial against him. The evil possibilities of even the worst criminals are limited, and often extremely few. The prostitution of justice in the courts of law vitiates the cardinal principles upon which the comfort and happiness, the security and progress, the prosperity and civilisation of a commonwealth depend. At the period of which I write, these vicious practices were usual weapons of the Executive Government in Ireland, especially in cases with a political and agrarian tinge. When the outrages of this and a later period are denounced, let the prolonged and continuous outrage by the Government upon justice never be forgotten. The reprisals of the people may have been blameworthy and deplorable. The provocation was such that only archangels or the most senile of slaves could endure without retaliation. The ultimate effect upon Irish life was little short of disastrous. It will take a whole generation of punctilious fairness to gain the confidence of the people for the courts of justice.

There was one particularly damning circumstance in the case. When the police rushed into young Forrester's room to arrest him he was in the act of tearing up a letter. The police seized the pieces, matched them together, and thus secured a document which to all appearances revealed a murder plot. This letter was produced by the Crown. The police had obtained by subterfuges specimens of Davitt's handwriting while he was awaiting trial. They now proved in the usual way that Davitt's was the handwriting in the torn letter seized from Forrester. Davitt told the story of the letter many years later. It was, in fact, written for the express purpose of averting the intended murder. It was successful, but this could not be proved at the trial, and to make matters worse, against Davitt's wishes, Forrester went into the witness-box and told a most ridiculous and improbable story about the incriminatory document. Eighteen years later, Davitt publicly appealed, without

naming him, to the only man alive who could corroborate his version of this fatal letter. Davitt had sheltered and, in fact, suffered for the fellow. He could have made confession without risk of any kind whatever, yet he kept his mouth shut. It is not known who was the person thus invited to do this act of justice, but Davitt declared of Forrester: "I have tried to let him out of my memory as well as I could."

Davitt and Wilson were found guilty. Davitt accepted the situation like the man he was. He gave no sign of regret, for he felt none, but he did most earnestly appeal on behalf of the Englishman beside him. He declared with emphasis, and it may be taken with perfect truth, that Wilson did not, in point of fact, know the object for which the weapons were to be purchased. Finally, he asked that whatever sentence was to be assigned to his companion in misfortune should be added to his own, and that he alone should suffer. Such pleadings from the dock are doomed to fall on deaf ears. A judge is practically powerless in cases of the kind, and in any event he probably fancies himself too old a bird to be caught with such chaff. The Irishman was sent into penal servitude for fifteen and the Englishman for seven years. Davitt had not expected to be dealt with so harshly. While the jury were in their private room considering the evidence and arriving at the verdict, he was taken from the dock and placed in a room, which he has named "the waiting room of fate." Generations of criminals and prisoners had filled in a similar interval of anxious suspense by writing and scratching on the walls and even on the low ceiling tags of autobiography, the musing of their desperate hopes, the anticipations of their gloomiest fears. During fleeting moments, that must have seemed ages to some of them, they had compressed into short, ejaculatory sentences, mostly of slang, epitomes of their agonies and revelations of the innermost depths of their hatreds and affections. Even murderers had toyed with the most dreadful of certainties. Rude sketches of the scaffold had been traced here and there on the walls. The weird habit of the place caught the young Irishman. To divert his attention from the hissing of a noisy gas-jet which added to the creepy feeling of the cell, he stood upon the seat and wrote in a vacant space of the low roof: "M. D. expects ten years for the crime of being an Irish Nationalist and the victim of an informer's perjury." He had underrated his offence.

Davitt's life as a convict began at six o'clock in the evening of July 18th, 1870, in the dock of the Old Bailey, the portal

of the inferno in which he was doomed to pass more than seven hideous years. His family had gone to America prior to his arrest, and there his father died while he was in prison.

His tortures had, indeed, begun even before he was brought to trial. As a result of his disclosures when his imprisonment had ended, coupled with an agitation which is to be attributed largely to the improved humanitarianism of the times, many reforms have been introduced to the prison system of England. But even forty years ago it was a principle of British jurisprudence that an accused person, under whatever circumstances apprehended, was held innocent until he had been proved guilty. It seems to have been, at all events in the case of Michael Davitt, merely a principle. From the moment when he was questioned and searched in Paddington Police Station, immediately after his arrest, he was regarded as a convicted prisoner. For the first three days he was kept in an almost darkened cell, in which there was a water-closet. He was allowed neither bed nor bedding, and for three days and two nights had no sleep. While he was eating his meals a little light was allowed into his cell. As yet, he had not even been charged before a magistrate.

After the first magisterial investigation at Marylebone Court, he was searched by a warder, in a way, as he himself has said, "almost too disgusting to describe." Stripped to the skin, his clothes and his person were meticulously examined, a warder standing by, lest the unhappy and abashed victim might resent this degradation. Nor was this deemed sufficient. He was brought before the magistrate five or six times, and on each occasion when brought back to the House of Detention at Clerkenwell the sickening process was repeated. He was also compelled to clean the water-closet, taps, and the other utensils in the cell. The humours of the law are an entertaining theme, and surely, in view of such proceedings as I have narrated, none is more comical than the fiction of the assumption of innocence in favour of an untried prisoner. I do not know whether there has been any reform in these respects, and it may be that no other procedure was or is really possible, but in that case the fiction is not only a sham, but a deliberate hypocrisy.

After having been returned for trial, Davitt was removed to Newgate, the historic home of infamy, so as to be near the Old Bailey, where the final scenes of the inquisition were laid. Davitt had always a good word to say for Newgate. He described it as "the only prison I have been in where the fact of my offence being an Irish political one did not cause my punishment to be the more severe on that account."

That the indignities to which he was subjected elsewhere were made needlessly cruel and offensive is sufficiently attested by his testimony to the decency manifested there by all the officials, from the governor down.

The manner in which Corydon identified him is best told in the prisoner's own words. "I was taken from the cell in which I was located," he said, "and marched along the ward in sight of the informer and detectives who accompanied him, and placed in a cell for identification. The informer was then supposed to look through the inspection hole of each cell in the ward to find me; and after being permitted to see me taken out of one cell and put into another, it was not a very brilliant achievement, even for John Joseph Corydon, to find me in the cell he saw me enter." It would be interesting to learn if it could be discovered how many juries have been hoodwinked by evidence thus deftly contrived.

An associate of his early years has given us a picture in outline of Davitt as he was when he stood in the dock of the Old Bailey—"a tall and commanding figure, with his strongly-marked features, and dark, bright eyes." He was now put in convict garb, his beard and hair were cropped close, and he was kept in Newgate for eleven days. He was then chained round the ankles, so that he could only stride some twelve or fifteen inches, and ordered to hold the chain with which his feet were bound. Considering that he had only his left arm, it certainly would appear that adequate safeguards had been arranged for the journey he was about to undergo. He was driven from Newgate along the Thames Embankment to Millbank Penitentiary, and here his penal servitude may be said to have begun. The poor fellow has left us an account of his feelings and reflections as he passed through the vast heedless city, and found himself for the first time in solitary confinement. Piteous and poignant as is his narrative, to express the full agony of his emotions he has to borrow from an Irish political convict as illustrious as himself. Mitchel had told how he flung himself upon his prison bed and burst into a passion of tears. Davitt adopts the description.

Millbank proved a hell. When he entered the gaol he was once more stripped naked and subjected to a sickening search. It is impossible to view his account of the maddening ordeal without a feeling of loathing for the system which allowed and directed it. No detail calculated to bestialise the unfortunate victim was omitted. The mind would revolt in horror at the fearful process, even were the process necessary, but that it could be necessary is quite out of the question, seeing

that Davitt had been under lock and key for three months, and had been searched from head to foot at least half-a-dozen times. Nor is the horror and amazement as much at the filthy and useless humiliation itself as at the fact that men were found willing to execute such outrages on their fellow beings. Terrible as is the effect on the victim, one feels that it is the wretches who inflict such punishments who are most degraded by the abominable formalities. That man has ameliorated his treatment of captives in the course of the ages is doubtless true, but it does not seem that the terrifying indecencies of Millbank were a sensible improvement upon the historic terrors of the Tower.

For ten months he remained at Millbank amid an accumulation of sufferings which must have made him many a time wish he were dead. His cell, with stone floor and white-washed walls, was about ten feet long and eight feet wide. There was neither table nor chair. His bed was made of three planks, raised three inches at the foot and six at the head. A covered bucket completed his furniture. It served as a seat and for washing. On this bucket, fourteen inches high, he had to sit ten hours each day picking oakum. There was nothing against which to lean his back. The effects of the painful drudgery plied under such circumstances can be imagined. His chest became weak, and he suffered from it to the end of his days. When he entered the prison he was exactly six feet in height. At the end of ten months he had dwindled an inch and a half. The agonies of the day were sufficiently excruciating, nor were the least of them the echoes which reached him from the throbbing city outside, the uproar of the streets, the clatter of the crowd, the bustling noises of the free. But it was at night that the worst sufferings gathered round. So often, in the pitch darkness of his cell, did he count the huge, sombre sounds of the old Hundreth tolled from Westminster Tower each quarter of an hour, that the giant clock haunted his memory for years upon years. It never struck but it burned into his soul the slowness of the minutes and the gaunt prospect of the long years ahead. What to all citizens of London was like an unsleeping sentinel of their safety was to the hopeless Irish patriot an incessant knell of death. "The bedding supplied," he has said, "was miserably insufficient during the winter months; and owing to this, and the sitting posture during the day, with feet resting upon cold flags, with no fire, and with a prohibition against walking in the cell, many prisoners have lost the use of their limbs from the effects of a Millbank winter. But

one hour's exercise in the prison yard was allowed each day, and that was forfeited if the weather proved unfavourable. Owing to my health beginning to break down, I was permitted an extra half-hour's exercise, after I had been eight months in the prison." To pick oakum was a task of the greatest severity, for he had only one hand, and when he asked a warder how he was to do it, he was brusquely told that "several blokes" had managed very well with their teeth. Conversation, except with warders and chaplains, was sternly forbidden, and many weeks sometimes passed without the exchange of a single word.

It does not require an agile fancy to imagine the physical sufferings the prisoner had to bear. Yet they were almost nothing compared with the mental agonies endured. Some of the Fenian prisoners went mad in this earthly hell; one of them died within it. Davitt himself began to dread for his reason. Madness seemed inevitable.

If one had to relate these tortures concerning the most vicious of malefactors one could not restrain a feeling of pity and sympathy, but when it is remembered that Davitt's crime was patriotism pure and simple, it is well-nigh impossible to restrain a passion of hatred against his gaolers. The ordinary routine of the place was terribly painful, but it did not satisfy the cruelty and callousness of some of the subordinate officials. They added, with a refinement of viciousness, an occasional practical joke. One of these fellows came to him, on May 25, 1871, and having cautioned him against disclosing the name of his informant, told him that he had heard of his pardon having arrived from the Home Office, and that he would be discharged next day. The rascal simulated gladness so cunningly that Davitt believed the story implicitly, and some hours were filled for him with ecstasies of joy. May 24th was the Queen's birthday, and some of the Fenian prisoners had been liberated a few months previously, so that the good news did not seem by any means far-fetched. Davitt tried to stammer out some thanks to his informant, and fell upon his knees to thank the Almighty for his liberation. At five o'clock next morning the door of his cell was opened, and he was directed towards the prison gate. No inkling of the truth came to him till he was face to face with two warders, dressed and fully armed for a journey. Then he knew how he had been hoaxed. He was to be removed from Millbank to Dartmoor. A handcuff was fastened on his wrist, and he left Millbank behind. Only a Dante could depict his despair.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AGONY OF DARTMOOR.

IT is not my intention to dwell in detail upon the agony of Davitt in Dartmoor. The iteration of his sufferings is tedious of itself. Nothing is to be gained by dwelling upon the inurement of such a fine character to the pains and penalties of a jail. The ceaseless round of his punishment gives small scope for varied narrative. Monotony is not the least of the captive's tortures, and of all forms of monotony that which is most afflicting to mind and body is the cankerous gnawing of perpetual hunger. Many a prisoner has described penal servitude as semi-starvation, and Davitt has left on record the fact that the quantity of food given in those days was never sufficient to abate the claims of appetite. He has often searched the filth heaps of the prison for some morsel, however disgusting, to assuage the pangs of hunger. Bits of candle from which human soil were wiped away were not rejected in those ravenous quests for food. The manual tasks pressed upon him with aggravated severity on account of his physical disability, and the absence of his right arm was no excuse for failure to maintain the exacting standards of the place. He suffered bitterly from the cold in winter, and in the stifling heats of summer nights he had to lie along the floor to gain a breath of air through the slit beneath the door.

The almost shrinking purity of Davitt's life and the nobility and kindliness of his nature made it an exquisite ordeal to be compelled to associate with the vilest of England's seething life. He could not by any stretch of imagination be considered a criminal in the proper signification of the word, yet he was forced to be intimate with the scum of rascaldom. There was no escape from it. It was his inevitable company, his closest comrade day by day, year in year out for seven years of his early manhood. That Davitt came uncontaminated from the fearful ordeal, his heart as pure, his mind as clean, his soul as serene, his faith as strong, his intellect as clear, his character as noble, his temperament as unsoured as in his boyhood days was little short of a miracle of human nature. Daniel had no such perils to escape. Davitt's sufferings did not even make him bitter; he harboured no vengeful thoughts against his jailers. No words of anger against

them escaped him when he was once again free, with the whole world for an audience. And surely this is the most wonderful fact of all, for he had great cause for the sternest resentment. Serious as might be his offence from a political point of view, it was neither vile nor vicious. There was nothing predatory or murderous in it. Yet he was herded with and treated like the most violent and rapacious ruffians, with whom no man's life or property was for a minute safe. Worse even than this. Amongst his compulsory associates were those whose crimes appal the human mind and sicken the human soul, loathsome creatures of abomination, and whose only possible palliation is "the mind diseased."

The effect of his surroundings made itself felt soon upon his frame. His worst fears were for his reason. He had only too good cause to know that these fears were reasonable. One morning while at prayers in the Catholic Chapel at Millbank, during the singing of one of Father Faber's beautiful hymns redolent of the innocent sweetness of childhood, a wild yell rent the air, and a prisoner, his eyes starting from their sockets, rushed towards the altar. The unhappy man had suddenly gone out of his mind, and in this terrifying manner had brought home to the assembled wretches what might also be in store for them.

Dartmoor Prison is built in a damp, foggy region, and amidst a desolation rare in the English landscape. The winters there are long and severe. During the revolutionary times French and American prisoners of war were incarcerated within it, and Lord Dundonald denounced the government of that day for placing brave and honourable, though unfortunate, foes in a place "enveloped from observation in almost perpetual fog." Curiously enough, the change from Millbank was in one respect a relief. In the London prison the prisoner was tortured by continual echoes of the outer world—now by the whistle of a steam-engine, anon by the strains of a band; sounds which only served to remind him of all that he had lost. At Dartmoor there was no contrast with the noises of captivity. It was the only mercy of the place. At first Davitt was put to breaking stones, but his hand blistering from the hammer, he was added to a cart party. "Each man in the cart party is supplied with a collar, which is put over the head, and passes from the left or right shoulder under the opposite arm, and is then hooked to the chain, by means of which the cart is drawn about. The cart party to which I was attached," he wrote, "was employed in carting stones, coals, manure and rubbish of all descriptions. In drawing the cart along, each prisoner

had to bend forward and pull with all his strength, or the warder who is driving will threaten to 'run him in,' or report him for idleness. It was our work to supply all parts of the prison—workshops, officers' mess-room, cookhouse, &c.—with coals, and I was often drawing these about in rain and sleet, with no fire to warm or dry myself after a wetting. I was only a few months at this sort of work, as I met with a slight accident by a collar hurting the remnant of my right arm, and was, in consequence of this, excused from cart labour by the doctor's orders." So, during the winter of 1870-71 he was again breaking stones.

"I was left at this work," he continues, "until spring, and was then removed to a task from the effects of which I believe I will never completely recover. My health on entering prison was excellent, never having had any illness at any previous period of my life. My employment after this was various: drawing carts, bogies laden with stones, slates, &c.; delving and shifting sand, at which work I was in the habit of using a pick and shovel (though not, I must fairly admit, compelled to do so), as the extreme cold made it necessary in order to keep myself from being congealed. I was next employed in winding up stones at an iron crank during the building of an additional wing to the prison; and this was beyond doubt the heaviest work at which they could have put me. A crank party consisted of four men, and my being one of the four compelled me to perform as much work as either of the others, as the task would fall heavier upon them otherwise. This employment was occasionally diversified with 'spells' at mortar-making, and various other jobs, among which carrying slates to the roof was one—not, of course, up a ladder, but by a steep incline." But stone-breaking was the work at which he was kept most constantly. From the end of 1873 until August, 1876, it was thus that an enlightened prison system employed one of the most upright and intellectual men within the Queen's Dominions. It was killing work as he was compelled to do it. In the winter months his pitch was in the teeth of a north-east wind, from which not the slightest shelter was provided. Only by plying the hammer with his left hand did he manage to keep a trace of warmth in his veins. When snow fell at night he had to clean it away in the morning before beginning his Sisyphean ordeal. All his appeals to the governor for indoor work went unheeded.

For a few weeks in 1872 he was transferred to Portsmouth—the only interlude of the six years' agony of Dartmoor. It proved a very horrible experience. Let him speak again for

himself. "In case of transfer from prison to prison convicts are handcuffed, by one hand only, to a chain that runs the whole length of the number of prisoners, and passes through a ring in each man's handcuff. By this means each convict has one hand at liberty to eat his food, attend to the calls of nature, &c., if he is fortunate enough to be possessed of two; and, if not, it is customary to substitute a body belt for a handcuff, in order to give him the use of one hand also. No such consideration was shown to me. I was purposely placed between two of the filthiest of the twenty-nine convicts, and had my wrist handcuffed back to back with one of them. I appealed against this ere I left Dartmoor, and requested a belt in lieu of a handcuff, or at least to be put at the end of the chain; but neither would be granted. One of the two between whom I was chained was afflicted with mephitic, or stinking breath, and the other, I think, with scrofula. During the journey to Portsmouth the latter one to whose hand mine was linked had an attack of diarrhœa, and I had to submit to the horrors of such a situation, as my hand would not be unlocked from his." The homeward journey to Dartmoor, in July, was as disconcerting as the outward had been the previous June. "I was accompanied by a madman, or, as he would be termed in prison slang, a 'balmy bloke.' I was handcuffed to him, of course, and while waiting for a train at Exeter, he managed to divest himself of most of his clothing, because he would not be allowed to ask people for tobacco."

Davitt always insisted that he was treated with special severity because he was an Irish political prisoner. It is a charge such as Ministers in Parliament are accustomed to waive aside as unworthy of serious consideration. Nor is it a charge such as can be very readily proved against official denial. Governors and subordinates in jails have of necessity a certain amount of discretion. Prison rules are obviously rigorous, even where most mildly administered, and they must be elastic when drastic measures are called for. Besides, a differentiation which is galling to a prisoner already breaking under his misery may appear imperceptible to the man who has never suffered any but the routine worries of life. And then, the complaint of the ordinary convict cannot but be coloured by his aversion to law and order. But it is impossible to resist the evidence with which Davitt sustained his allegation. In spite of frequent appeals, and contrary to all the rules, he was not allowed to receive a visit from any one from the day after his sentence to the day of his discharge. No reason would be given him for his excep-

tional treatment. He desired to draw attention to the case of the unfortunate man Wilson, who had been sentenced with him. Even for that purpose he would not be allowed to see one of his friends. The ordinary privilege of selecting a companion from his ward during exercise on Sunday was denied him of all the inmates of the jail. All his appeals for labour suited to his disablement were summarily rejected. On one occasion he was confined in a punishment cell for three days because he refused to bear a load which the prison doctor subsequently said was too heavy for him to carry. On another occasion he was again thrown into a punishment cell and kept on bread and water for four days for refusing to say "sir" instead of "here" when answering his name called by an assistant warder. Petty annoyances were specially devised for him. Nor could he ever get an explanation of these exceptional hardships from governor or turnkey.

The conclusion is irresistible. The Irish political prisoner was a mark for all the ingenuity in punishment that these experts could bring to bear upon him. It would occur to one that the full rigour of penal servitude was sufficient to purge a sedition which had been unattended with even the slightest hurt to life or limb; that, at any rate, the punishment deemed sufficient for the most lawless and vicious ruffians whom the criminal classes could precipitate, was sufficient for this one-armed man, who had merely loved his country, mayhap not wisely, but too well. That Davitt's charge was just it is not possible to doubt, and it shows the prison system and officialdom of England at that time in a peculiarly odious and repulsive light.

Nor is this the worst that can be said of it. Twenty years before the time of which I write, Mr. Gladstone had writhed during the trial of Poerio because of the perjury of the chief witness for the prosecution—the John Joseph Corydon of Naples. His blood boiled because he found "filth and horror" in Neapolitan prisons. He burned with indignation because he saw political prisoners "chained two and two in double irons to common felons." He imparted some, at least, of his very righteous wrath to the people of England. The letters to Aberdeen are amongst the finest transactions of his splendid career. But here we are in the 'seventies, not "under the acacias and palms, between the fountains and statues of the Villa Reale," but in Millbank, within sound of Big Ben, and at Dartmoor, in an adjoining shire, and the one-armed Irish political prisoner is chained to the filthiest denizens of the gaols, and put on bread and water for refusing to say "sir" to an under-warder. All England

devoured Gladstone's Letters on Naples in the 'fifties. Not a word reached them of Dartmoor in the 'seventies. Thus does distance discolour political crimes. Thus does righteous indignation wax colder as it returns from the Grand Tour. Thus do peoples and governments incur the suspicion of hypocrisy. The statesmen and citizens of England worked themselves into fever heat over the sufferings of Poerio and Settembrini "wearing their double chains, subsisting on their foul soup, depraved by forced companionship with criminals." Twenty years later they inflicted all this and worse on Michael Davitt, Thomas Chambers, John O'Brien, McCarthy, and others. Nor is it hard to imagine what they would have said if an Italian or an American Gladstone had intervened to obtain a mitigation of these sufferings. The truth is that cruelty is never cruder and injustice never more shameless than in the punishment of political crimes, and they are precisely the crimes that look most romantic and least criminal at a distance.

In 1876 an event happened in Australia, the effects of which were felt even by Michael Davitt in the prison at Dartmoor. Amongst the Fenian prisoners were some who had been sentenced to long terms of penal servitude for introducing the Irish republican organisation into the ranks of the British Army, and seducing the soldiers from their duty and allegiance to the Queen. At that period there was a very large number of Irishmen in the army, and to many of them the Fenian oath was administered. In the cavalry regiment in which John Boyle O'Reilly served, and which was stationed at Dublin, there was a considerable body of men ready to obey the orders of the Fenian leaders, and to join in a rebellion for the purpose of setting up a republic. It was a most serious and formidable aspect of the movement, and greatly alarmed the authorities. Several of the military Fenians, as they were called, were transported to Western Australia, one of the old penal settlements. A daring project, conceived and prepared in America, culminated in the rescue of six of them in April, 1876. John Breslin, who had been instrumental in arranging the escape of the Fenian Chief, James Stephens, from Richmond Bridewell, and John Boyle O'Reilly, who had himself already escaped from an Australian prison, were leading spirits in the amazing enterprise. The barque "Catalpa" was bought and fitted out, and sailed from New Bedford in March, 1875. The voyage of the ship and the triumphant issue of its dangerous errand have been told many a time, and would not enter into my narrative at all but for the fact

that poor Davitt was given plenty of reason to regret the extraordinary success of the new Fenian plot, as audacious and sensational as almost anything in fiction. Six of the prisoners were brought away from Freemantle on Easter Monday, April 17, 1876. The "Catalpa" was detected, and pursued. She flew the Stars and Stripes, and between good handling and impudence, managed to clear all dangers, and bring the fugitives in safety to New York, the news of the astonishing coup creating wild enthusiasm throughout the Irish world.

Under the circumstances it is, perhaps, somewhat unfair to call what ensued an unnecessary official panic. At any rate, Davitt in Dartmoor was immediately transferred to the washhouse, which was in the very centre of the prison, and, as he said himself, "free from all apprehensions of a surprise." As he was physically unable to wash clothes, he was located at the wringing machine, probably as painful an instrument of torture as could possibly have been chosen for him. Nor was this all. From August 16th, 1876, to November 9th, 1877, he was lodged in a penal cell, under the strictest surveillance. Every hour throughout the night an iron trap-door was opened, so that a warder might inspect him, and then banged to so harshly as to awake him from his pitiful slumbers. "In addition to this," he tells us, "there was the howling of the 'balmy blokes,' or madmen, the shouting and crying of the poor fellows in dark cells upon bread and water, and the singing of those who chose to satisfy their hunger with a snatch of some favourite song. All this was not very favourable to repose after a hard day's work. Once every twelve days I was shifted from one cell to another in this 'chokey,' and had, in consequence of this, to clean the dirty cells which other prisoners would leave behind." Lastly, it must be noted that these penal cells, intended for incorrigible convicts, had but the merest modicum of ventilation; there was no opening into the external air, and they were so foul and vitiated, especially in summer, as to be almost absolutely unbearable. "I have had repeatedly," Davitt declared, "to go on my knees and put my mouth to the bottom of the door for a little air."

These excruciating precautions were, of course, quite unnecessary at Dartmoor, yet they continued almost to the very end of his imprisonment. Upon that fearful agony I have perhaps delayed too long. Amongst political prisoners few have suffered more grievously than Michael Davitt. None ever came from the ordeal more sanctified or more formidable. We must now return to Westminster and Charles Stewart Parnell.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARNELL IN PARLIAMENT.

AN Irish Nationalist finds the history of England for 1874 and 1875 amusing and exasperating reading. Politically, Ireland was in the throes of a new and painful birth. Some of her most devoted sons were in the convict prisons of England. Gladstone was pelting pamphlets at the Papacy, and selling his china and wedgewood ware. The English people bought his pamphlets by the hundred thousand. Ritualism was the burning topic of the hour while Davitt was breaking stones and living on skilly for having revolted against the misgovernment of Ireland.

The night Parnell took his seat in the House of Commons a Coercion Bill for Ireland was under discussion. It was in the Committee stage, and Butt, desiring to impede its progress, asked the Home Rule member for Cavan, Mr. Joseph Gillis Bigger, to speak against time. "How long would you wish me to speak?" asked Bigger. "A pretty good while," replied Butt. Bigger was an Ulster man, a merchant of Belfast, and a member of the Supreme Council of the Fenian Brotherhood. He was impervious to criticism, a mis-shapen man, a miracle of stubborn tenacity, upon whom censure was lost. He was fiercely attached to his native land. He disliked most cordially the English *regime* in Ireland. He was a Presbyterian. They make the most dogged and uncompromising nationalists.

He put the most liberal interpretation upon Butt's "pretty good while." A prolonged, inaudible, and irrelevant harangue rolled out hour after hour, until he had been four hours on his feet. The whole thing was ridiculous. Parnell witnessed the farcical performance. Obstruction was born.

On August 25th, four days after this instructive incident, he made his maiden speech. It was not an impressive *début*, "I trust," he said, as well as his acute nervousness would let him, "that England will give to Ireland the right which they claim—the right of self-government. Why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England, as I heard an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer call her some time ago? Ireland is not a geographical fragment: she is a nation." Clearly, Britain had little to fear from the new member. For the rest of the session and the year he remained in the background. A few questions, a few short

interventions, which could scarcely be called speeches, exhausted his Parliamentary activities for 1875. But he was learning his business. He watched the House closely. He acquired a fair working knowledge of its rules. He was picking his steps. Above all, he was taking stock of the Irish representation. The one definite lesson he took from his first session he imparted to his constituents in Meath, where he spoke twice that October: "We do not want speakers in the House of Commons, but men who will vote right. The Irish people should watch the conduct of their representatives in the House of Commons."

From the English point of view the political horizon was serene. Except for Bigger, the Irish members were almost all complaisant. The new Home Rule movement had spread to England. The Irish in places like Liverpool had begun to take a hand in it, but there was apparently nothing to disquiet British paties. Mr. Barry O'Brien's notes the political review of the Dublin correspondent of the *Times* to show how wide of the mark was the general estimate of the position. "The present circumstances of Ireland," wrote Dr. Patton, "may be briefly summed up in the statement that at no prior time of her history did she appear more tranquil, more free from serious crime, more prosperous and contented. But few of the disquieting elements of former times are now at work. Political excitement has all but died out with Mitchel and Martin, whose last effort to revive it exhausted its impotent fury." Thus do the cocksure gentlemen of the Press arrange the future for the people. Sometimes the people do not acquiesce. In this case Dr. Patton was merely expressing the general opinion. A very similar conclusion, similarly based, has been belied by Ireland time and time again. The *Times* and its comrades were only witnessing the calm which preceded the inevitable tempest. Such authorities had neither the time nor the taste to pry beneath the surface of things in regard to Ireland. It was time enough to bid the devil good-morrow when he put in an appearance; in any case it was comforting and convenient to conclude from the absence "of serious crime" that that gentleman was now at long last dead.

But if people were, indeed, anxious to understand the Irish question and the Irish situation at the moment a most instructive event took place under their very noses, in broad daylight, upon which they might have pondered with advantage. The Centenary of O'Connell was celebrated in Dublin on August 6th, 1875.

The love of O'Connell will never be extinguished in the

breast of Ireland. Unlike most of the Irish National Constitutionalist leaders, he was a pure-bred Gael. He was identified as was no other human being, priest or layman, in the long, chequered history of his land, with the ancient faith of the people. He had dominated them as did no other man in all their annals, without losing their affection, and he won and held their affection without losing their respect. His virtues were theirs, immensely magnified. His very faults were coloured with romance. Even his enemies and opponents held him in reverential awe. Mitchel scowls at his shade, but trembles a little. He was the most familiar figure of his time, and he is one of the few men in history who became familiar without having the majesty of their greatness impaired. "Dan" was in the real, the truest, the best sense of the phrase, the Father of his People.

All Ireland prepared to celebrate the centenary of his birth. He had lived long. Thousands of people still living had seen the mighty champion, and had surrendered to the witchery of his glorious voice. Many of them with saddened hearts and heavy steps had followed his hearse a quarter of a century before. He was still far more than a mere historical figure or a tradition. His majestic presence was still felt. In the political despond of the time his expansive energy was often recalled, and his sway was sorely missed. From all parts of the island crowds of worshippers poured into the ancient capital of the nation. Dublin could not accommodate the multitude from the provinces. Vast numbers had to sleep in the open on the green sward of the Phoenix Park, the largest and finest of its kind in Europe. The demonstration in the streets baffled adequate description. The city was filled with reminders of the Liberator; the house where he had lived so long, whence he went forth to the fateful duel with D'Esterre; the City Hall, where he presided over the first of the reformed Corporations, and where he had met Isaac Butt in argument; the Chapel in Westland Row, where he used to worship, and where his chain of office, hung on the gate while he was at Mass, was guarded Sunday after Sunday by the coal-porters from the quays; the Four Courts, which had rung with his unrivalled eloquence; the jail, where he had been illegally imprisoned; the noble tomb where he slept. The metropolis was now to be enriched by Foley's masterpiece—the magnificent statue of the Liberator which has already inspired two generations of young Irishmen, and which embodies in its bronze his history and achievements. The foundation stone of the monument was to be laid that day as the culminating event of the great national pageant. But

there was a serious rift in the lute, which to those who just looked on the surface was simply another example of the factiousness of the Irish, but had a deep significance to those who were not content with the customary conventional explanations.

Amongst the bodies represented on the great occasion was the Home Rule Confederation of England, to which some of the "English Fenians" had attached themselves. The Irish from Manchester, Liverpool, and other towns in the North of England had gone to Dublin in considerable numbers. The Confederation delegates on reaching the city asked the officials of the demonstration to allot them a place in the procession. The reply did credit neither to the head nor the heart nor the manners of the organiser who made it. "Oh," he said, "we are not going to give a place in the procession to Fenians." The delegates resolved to look after themselves. With bands and banners they simply got to the head of the procession. An awkward and ugly situation was created. "O'Connell's Bodyguard"—the coalporters of Dublin—were to have marched in the front, and the coalporters proceeded to dislodge the usurpers, but with great good sense and courtesy when they saw such inscriptions on the banners as "Liverpool Home Rule Branch" and "Freedom for the Political Prisoners," they conceded to the visitors pride of place. But the trouble had not ended. Mr. P. J. Smyth, an Irish member of Parliament, who was afterwards bought up by the English Government, indignant that the programme had been violated, with a number of followers, rushed at the car which held the banner on which Amnesty was demanded for the Fenian prisoners, cut the traces, and pulled away the horses.

Parnell, who, seemingly from no where, flung himself suddenly into the heated and dangerous incident, was seen to dash forward at the moment. He had with him a few supporters as impetuous as himself, and their act was evidently spontaneous. This party, with Parnell at its head, seized the traces, and amid an ovation, dragged forward the Amnesty Car to the place where the Centenary Address was to be delivered.

There were other troubles still. The orator chosen for the occasion was Lord O'Hagan, but men of strong views considered that while he might voice the Catholic aspect of the occasion sufficiently well, the services of the Liberator as the political champion of his race should come from purer lips. The end of it was that there were two meetings and two sets of speeches. Isaac Butt was sought out, brought to

the platform, and delivered a speech. Everything ended happily enough under the cantankerous circumstances of the case. We would not have been much concerned with the incident here but for the apparition of Parnell in its midst. But it certainly indicated anything except that laying of political ghosts which the *Times* correspondent had so glibly reported.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUGH WORK WANTED.

IN view of all that occurred in the few years following, it is nearly impossible to regard Parnell's intervention on behalf of the Amnesty Car as merely an impulsive and thoughtless act of chivalry. There were many evidences for those who had ears and eyes that Fenianism was not dead, but sleeping—scarcely sleeping either, for the Amnesty movement which was now in progress offered many proofs of its vigour. The Fenian prisoners had now been many years in jail. Tidings of their savage treatment reached Ireland. A demand for the remission of their sentences arose. Great meetings were held. One of them in the Phoenix Park was broken up with extreme brutality by the police, and it may be mentioned as showing the way in which Irish Nationalists were handled in the old bad days of Dublin Castle rule, that Mr. John Mallon, who lived to be Assistant Commissioner of the Force, stated that the unbridled constabulary were hurled on the inoffensive people by officers who were at the moment under the influence of drink. Such outrages were not uncommon in Ireland until comparatively recent times. At all events, Parnell could not but have seen that the most reliable Nationalists were the Fenians and those who sympathised with them. He began very early in his Parliamentary career to condemn the Irish representation. His mother's leanings to Fenianism were known to him. As yet his political creed, never very comprehensive, was narrowed down to dislike of England, and upon that platform the most congenial spirits were those tinged with Fenianism. Parnell thought slowly, but he clung with the tenacity of fanaticism to a conclusion once grasped. It is probable that he never would have been a very great constructive statesman, for the rather paradoxical reason that he was altogether too practical. His imagination was sluggish. His

fancy carried no pinions. Yet this helped while his work was still destructive. It was especially an aid while he was looking about for a safe taking-off place from which to spring. He was already utterly dissatisfied with the Parliamentary conditions, but he was not as yet quite sure of his footing. Nothing can be surer than that he was laboriously, and with painful slowness, analysing the elements with which he might have to deal. It was the process he had indicated to his brother fully two years previously, even before he had sought election to the House of Commons. "I must look round for myself first; I must see a little more how things are going; I must make out my own way. The whole question is English dominion. That is what is to be dealt with, and I do not know what the men in these movements intend." Their intentions were probably by this time sufficiently clear to him. He could not fail to see that at any rate the Fenians were honest, and in earnest. They were men whose support would be valuable, especially if they could be induced to take his practical view of political affairs. The incident of the Amnesty Car is a clue, slight in itself perhaps, but direct and unmistakeable, to his mental attitude at this period. Another is found in the fact that he regarded the Ballot Act with greater respect than the Disestablishment of the Church or the Land Act of '70. He was right. The Ballot Act was the sure foundation for all constitutional agitation and progress.

That he was brooding over the utility of the Fenians is apparent from an incident in the House of Commons, on June 30th, 1876. Isaac Butt had originated one of the recurring motions for an enquiry into the demand for self-government. The Chief Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, joined in the debate "Of all the extraordinary delusions," he said, "which are connected with the subject, the most strange to me appears the idea that Home Rule can have the effect of liberating the Fenian prisoners." But it would appear to any other man except a Chief Secretary that the contrary idea was, in fact, the extraordinary delusion. At any rate, he went on to complete his sentence by adding "the Manchester murderers," when a sharp, angry voice snapped into the speech and astonished everyone with a vehement "No, No." It was Parnell's voice. From every side protests were murmured against what seemed to the English members a justification of murder. Hicks-Beach stared at the young Irishman. "I regret to hear that there is an honourable member in the House," he observed, amid cheering, "who will apologise for murder." The worst possible inter-

pretation, however unjust, is often an irresistible temptation to a politician on his feet. "Withdraw" was yelled from all parts of the Chamber. It was the first time the Commons had the chance of noting what it was to become so thoroughly accustomed to before long—the imperturbable coolness of Parnell. He rose without flurry, and spoke in tones which must have sent a chill down the backs of some of his audience. "The right hon. gentleman," he observed calmly, "looked at me so directly when he said that he regretted that any member of the House should apologise for murder that I wish to say as publicly as I can that I do not believe, and never shall believe, that any murder was committed at Manchester." The incident was immensely pleasing to the extremists throughout Ireland and England.

It was this year that Ronayne, the member for Cork, had incubated the obstruction egg. Bigger, who had already, as it might be said, informally obstructed the House, was his man. Irish interference in English legislation was the formal method suggested by Ronayne. Bigger agreed. With characteristic North of Ireland dryness of humour he glossed the policy as "an intelligent interest in English affairs." The year passed, however, and the idea remained undeveloped.

Meanwhile Parnell had been back in America, and again we have evidence of his hankering after the Fenians. A large Amnesty meeting was held at Harold's Cross, Dublin, at which an address was voted to the President of the United States, the famous Ulysses Grant, congratulating the people of America on the centenary of their independence. Parnell was one of the delegates chosen to carry the address to Washington. Diplomatic difficulties arose at the White House. It was necessary that the address should be presented through the British Ambassador. The Irishmen declined to avail themselves of his services. A correspondence with the Secretary of State ensued. Finally, the address was received by Congress, and the Irishmen rightfully claimed the honours of the affair. But Parnell had returned before the victory.

In November he stepped ashore at Liverpool and addressed a Home Rule meeting. We know from Mr. Barry O'Brien, who speaks on the authority of an eye-witness, that the speech was badly delivered, that Parnell was still a very patent novice in the art, and that it was painful to listen to him on this occasion, as he stood with fist clenched nervously, and stumbled forward from word to word. But the speech does not read like the work of a novice. There is

no indication of nervousness about it, except in the short, sharp, sometimes jerky sentences. Nor is the vocabulary either sparse or awkward. It is, in fact, the speech of a man who knew perfectly well what he wanted to say, and said it so that there could be no mistake about it.

It is remarkable as the first presentation, the earliest we have, at any rate, of Parnell's idea of Home Rule. "Our position in Ireland is peculiar," thus runs the vital passage. "One party says we go too far in the Home Rule agitation, while another party says we do not go far enough. You have been told we have lowered the national flag, that the Home Rule cause is not the cause of Ireland a Nation, and that we will degrade our country into the position of a province. I deny all this. There is no reason why Ireland under Home Rule would not be Ireland a Nation in every sense and for every purpose that it is right she should be a nation. I have lately seen in the City of New York a review of the militia, in which five or six thousand armed and trained men took part, at least half of them being veterans of the war. They marched past with firm step, and armed with improved weapons. They were at the command of the Legislature of New York, and they could not budge one inch from the city without the orders of the governor. If in Ireland we could ever have under Home Rule such a national militia they would be able to protect the interests of Ireland as a nation, while they would never wish to trespass upon the integrity of the English Empire, or to do harm to those they then would call their English brothers."

Two other points in the speech are worth noting. Much as he may have distrusted the English, he was practical enough to allay his own private prejudices and to face facts. "Englishmen themselves," he said, "are in many respects fair-minded and reasonable, but it is almost impossible to get at them—it requires intelligence almost superhuman to remove the clouds of prejudice under which they have lived during their lives." But far more important was his diagnosis of the case of the Irish in England: "I know the difficulties of the position of the Irish people in England. It is not easy for people living as they are in friendship with their English neighbours to keep themselves separated from English political organisations, but they have never been afraid to lay aside private and local considerations in favour of supporting their fellow-countrymen at home." He had already grasped the possibilities of the Irish element in the life of England herself. More than this, he had perceived

the only possible method by which it could be made to help the Home Rule cause.

Finally, it was in 1876, in the Lobby of the House of Commons, that he spoke to a colleague these pregnant words :—" It is not by smooth speeches that you will get anything done here. We want rougher work." His preparatory education was finished.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRUCIAL YEAR.

WE have now arrived at 1877, the crucial year in the political career of Charles Stewart Parnell. That year saw the beginning of Parliamentary obstruction in earnest, the rise of Parnell's popularity with the Irish, and the first signs of his approaching domination of Irish affairs. From 1877 dates his supremacy, for it was then that he founded his leadership. He had now got his political legs fairly well under him. He was again favoured by circumstances. The Fenians in England had supported Butt's movement since 1870. They were beginning to tire of the old man. They liked Parnell better the more they knew of him. Besides, he caught the House of Commons napping. It is not in the least extraordinary, though it is an attitude which looks uncommonly stupid in history, that the English members at first regarded Parnell as a bore, who would have to be endured for a time, but would pass off, just like the measles or any other simple though bothersome affliction. It was another advantage for him. He sprang his surprise with more success than would have been possible if Parliament had been accustomed to pay the slightest attention to the quarter of the House from which the new leader emerged. He had almost won before Ministry or members appreciated the phenomenon of an Irish member holding up the Government and Commons of England. How little he seemed to count is well illustrated by the story that even Butt was inclined to look down upon him. "That young man will be the death of you," said an Irish member to the old leader on one occasion. "Nonsense," was the quick reply, "I can drive him out of public life with a word." An old Irish Tory member, one of the landlord class who sat for a western constituency—after he had long left parliamentary life behind and subsided into a well-paid Castle appointment—

described to me in his racy, homely, genial way the effect of Parnell's incursion—as it appeared to him. “The House of Commons,” he said, “was the best club in London; in the world. It was the pleasantest place imaginable, until Parnell and the Irish made it intolerable. It became very nasty and unpleasant.” The old man did not go very deeply into the matter, but his description was as just as it was graphic. He had presented truly the immediate effects of Parnell's activity, but we have seen the full results in the sweeping changes in Parliamentary procedure, and in the reduction of the House of Commons to an assemblage of delegates impotent to do much more than keep Ministers in office while programmes are reaching the Statute Book. To loosen the fatal grip of Parnell the House had to strangle its own liberties, to closure its speech, to abandon some of its most useful privileges, to hedge itself round with all kinds of rigid safeguards lest it should be turned into a laughing-stock again. If Parnell exercised a baneful influence on the Parliamentary institutions of England, Englishmen themselves are alone to blame. In the process of undermining them he worked incalculable benefit to Ireland. No Irish democrat will rejoice at the injury done—if indeed injury was done—but the story carries a useful lesson. Studied and prolonged injustice never goes unpunished, and even Achilles ought to have remembered that he had a vulnerable spot. When Parnell turned its very liberties against the House of Commons itself he was, perhaps unconsciously, demonstrating how the freedom of popular assemblies can best be conserved and developed. By obstruction, so skilfully applied that it baffled some of the finest Parliamentary intellects of the time, he compelled the attention of the Legislature. It is true that he also provoked it to further coercion—if, indeed, at that period it required provocation to the task—but he was convinced, and he was right, that, having justice on his side, if he could obtain a hearing, and at the same time make his English audience uncomfortable, he was certain to advance his cause. There is nothing more remarkable in our history than the pitilessly logical method by which he did advance after he had got his first firm grip on the Parliamentary machine. For the time being he was the most important man in the House. It was impossible to ignore him. Members had to listen. He filled the Press even without speaking. His figure brooded like a portent over St. Stephen's. He meddled with English affairs. If there was any disinclination to endure an Irish debate, then he interfered in business of no particular interest to Ireland; and he

thus effected some of the most notable reforms of the time. So adroitly did he manage, that he often gathered the support of English groups, unconscious that they were helping the Irish Sampson to shake the pillars of their temple. In a few sessions Parnell was the most formidable figure in the British Parliament. He had killed two birds with the one stone. During all this period he had his eye on Ireland itself. He had now, as he judged, the clue to Parliamentary success, but he had no illusions. If the Government and Parliament had only to deal with the problem of obstruction and with a more or less noisy little band of Irish members, the episode, however dramatic, would be merely episodic, and would soon disappear from the public mind. He must have Ireland—Ireland at home and Ireland over the seas—behind him, and there must be no mistake about it, if he were to use his discovery to the political advantage of his country. Therefore, while he was shaping his policy in the House, he was desperately anxious about Ireland itself. Ireland was much harder to manage than Parliament; but it goes without saying that his success in reducing the British House of Commons to distraction, if not to impotency, was an immense help to him in getting hold of Ireland as well. The difficulties were many and curiously varied. Unity has never been a strong point with the Irish race. Like most wits, they are inveterate critics. They have a penchant for personalities. They can be exquisite flatterers and ruthless censors of those involved in their affairs. They sway from one extreme to another. Like all people who are intrepid and impulsive, they commit many a fault, and none is more intolerant of sin than the sinner. That their great and admirable qualities predominate does not alter the fact that they are a difficult race to manage, especially for their political good. Despite the new adhesions to the Home Rule Party, there was never less unity in Ireland than when Parnell began his work. There were the Home Rule Whigs, or Whig Home Rulers, who supported Butt's policy. These had been joined by the angry Protestants, under the circumstances already described. There were the Fenians, who abhorred Parliamentary action. There were the masses, practically unattached and altogether unorganised, a mere agglomeration of seething and conflicting emotions and sympathies. Parnell scanned this political and, indeed, ethnographical puzzle with the same cunning discernment with which he had analysed the Parliamentary problem. He appreciated political values instinctively. It was one of his greatest, perhaps his greatest, characteristic, and it was joined with a singularly apt and useful talent for

estimating individuals correctly. It was a gift which struck most forcibly some of the Fenians with whom he came in contact. "Parnell possessed in a most remarkable degree," one of them has written, "a gift which was of great service to him during his political career as the successor of Isaac Butt. This was the faculty of weighing up the special qualities of the various members of the Irish Party, and using them accordingly." At any rate, he saw clearly that the Fenians were the key to success in Ireland. Butt held the loyalty and allegiance of the moderate men. Although they were under many and great obligations to him, and held him in the highest respect and esteem, the physical force and republican party would not dream of countenancing his constitutional manœuvres. The conspiracy of 1865 had been smashed before it could be brought to a head. The Rising of 1867 had been little more than a parochial disturbance. But the Fenians were unconverted and unconvinced. Parnell found in them the nucleus of his movement and all its triumphs. His real aim was, of course, to gain the vast mass of the people, who were just confused spectators of the shuffling of the moderates, and the silent, sullen, subterranean strategy of the extremists. They had sympathies for both. They craved for help and hope. They had been coerced by England into hatred of her. They were as yet incoherent, but when they did mutter it was to curse. They were ready for a leader, but they had been so often disappointed and deceived that they were filled with suspicion of all who sought their favour. I recollect an incident in Dublin history which illustrates powerfully the wretched political condition of the great body of the people. I remember strong, life-long Nationalists sent into the seventh heaven of delight because two Liberals, Brooks and Lyons, won at an election in the city. The earth was dark, indeed, when such stars sent thrills of gladness into the hearts of men. It is within the memory of a man who still fancies himself young. Parnell reached the affections of these people through the medium of the Fenians, and it is quite in accord with the methodical bent of his temperament that he took what seemed to be the very longest road in this round-about journey. It was to the Fenians in England he first appealed for a platform, and they accommodated him. It is a fact of the greatest historical interest, and deserves to be studied. He never joined the physical force movement. The Fenians tried to win him, but in vain. Parnell was perfectly candid and uncompromising. He would not join any political secret society, oath-bound or otherwise. When we try to estimate

his life and work it is necessary to remember that to gain a hearing from such men he had to come to them with something more than the hope of success—with success itself. Parliamentary obstruction was the lucky talisman. But nothing is more curious and entertaining than to note the nimble skill with which, once he had gained a measure of Fenian support, he kept them in good cheer and high spirits. He was a master of enigmatical appeal. To the very last of his days he was constant in his pointed and pregnant references to the importance of the young men of Ireland. He always encouraged the notion that there was a more portentous movement behind his own, which was available in the last resort. And he uttered the self-evident truism that no man could set bounds to the march of a nation, with just the proper inflection of significance for the Fenian ear. It was, therefore, in the British House of Commons and on the Fenian platform in England that he got his first credentials of leadership. All other Irish constitutional leaders had begun in Ireland with the Irish people. Parnell built more astutely than any of them, laying his foundations in the very heart of the enemy country before taking in hands the Irish at home. It is probable that in no other way could he have succeeded so well. To secure the united support of Ireland was no easy matter in any event. It would have been immensely more difficult than it was but that he gave them the opportunity of viewing his initial successes from a distance, and magnifying them in consequence. The news of them came to their imaginative minds with the exaggeration of a legend, and he was already a hero when he took off his coat to the work of welding the nation in a single political phalanx under his command. Simultaneously, he had his eye on the Irish representation in the House of Commons. It was in a most discreditable state. He had sized it up and searched it through and through before he had been a session at Westminster, and he resolved on a thorough cleansing of the Irish benches. It was much easier said than done. Many of the Irish members, rotten as they were politically, time-servers and place-hunters, and men of mediocre talents, buttressed with flaunting social gifts, were glued to their seats. Family connections, hereditary associations, the dispensation of patronage, the influence of wealth and the restricted franchise, gave them a hold on the constituencies which had successfully resisted many spasmodic attacks. Even before the new Franchise Law placed Parnell at his zenith he had shaken badly the old coterie, and already formed round him an honest, resolute and resourceful band of members. When the electorate was

expanded his Parliamentary forces grew with it, and in the construction of his party he was phenomenally lucky and skilful. Later in life, when the party was riven in twain, and some of his early comrades were in arms against him, he was inclined to belittle his personal responsibility for the formation of the first real Irish Parliamentary Party. Yet, notwithstanding all that happened, it might well have made him proud to have been its sole architect. It may be that an Irish Nationalist is liable to exaggerate its merits. But it does not seem easy to do so. When we recall the wide variety of the talents it embodied, the splendid encomiums it extorted from quarters that were none too friendly, the superb debating power it developed, the sparkling oratory of some of its members, the decisive influence it obtained in Parliamentary affairs, the completeness with which it responded to all the imperious exigencies of a complicated political position, and, above all, its steady and unchangable integrity, it does not appear possible for an Irishman to be too proud of its personnel and its history. It numbered men of highly-disciplined industry, who brought expert business skill to the national affairs, it developed adept authorities on Parliamentary tactics, it contained the most mordant political critic in the House, and several speakers of the first rank. It was filled with high literary accomplishments. It included the greatest debater of his time after Gladstone himself, whose praises of the Irishman seemed to reach the verge of hyperbole, but are well within the truth. When, in a private letter to a noble Englishwoman, and which did not reach the public eye until twenty years after it had been written, he described Mr. Thomas Sexton as "little short of a master," he spoke with fifty years' of Parliamentary experience behind him, and years before he had abandoned finally the nettled path of coercion. Ireland subsequently forgot that there were penalties she must pay for such a galaxy of genius. It is herculean restraint for such men to subordinate themselves to leadership, however rightfully asserted, and we must never forget that this restraint they had borne with unruffled cheerfulness during a painful and portentous decade. Here, then, were some of the most obvious gifts of Parnell to Ireland—striking Parliamentary success, an organised people, unity of aim, concentration of purpose, and a Parliamentary Party at once honest and adequate. From the possession of these gifts Ireland learned to believe in itself, and to see clearly the right road to complete victory, and that national self-confidence was the greatest of all the treasures Parnell bestowed upon his people.

CHAPTER XI.

HOLDING UP PARLIAMENT.

THERE are few circumstances more remarkable and at the same time more inexplicable than the assumption of Parliamentary leadership by Parnell. It is worth emphasising the fact that he was the Irish leader long before he was elected to the Chairmanship of the Irish Party, long before he was formally installed and acknowledged. In the days of his last campaign he insisted on that fact, and he was well within the truth. He might have claimed even more than he did. It would be almost absolutely correct to say that he scarcely derived his leadership even from the people of Ireland. With quite as much justice might it be said that he imposed his vivid personality on the Irish movement, and constituted himself its spirit and mouthpiece. It was something like the assertion of a hereditary ownership. The people acquiesced. It was all they had to do.

From the spring of 1877 he pursued his own course, practically regardless of the opinion of Mr. Butt, and certainly without any instigation from Ireland. His political instinct was faultless from the very beginning. It is seldom that it can be said of a politician that any mistakes he made were at the end of his career. Parnell went far before he slipped even once. Obstruction was not, in a sense, a definite arrangement. Parnell himself cannot be said to have had a precise scheme to start with. He spoke a generality when he said: "We must show them that we mean business. They are a good deal too comfortable in that House, and the English are a good deal too comfortable everywhere." Ronayne was only a trifle more explicit: "When we want to get our business through, they stop us. We ought to show them that two can play at this game of obstruction. Let us interfere in English legislation. Let us show them that if we are not strong enough to get our work done, we are strong enough to prevent them from getting theirs." Out of such vague gossip the magician had to evolve a policy. You will search the records in vain for a better management of Parliamentary strategy and tactics. The purpose was for long concealed with almost Machiavelian skill. When the disguises were partly pierced, the manœuvres were continued

with a plausibility that served the purpose almost as well as the original deceit. By the time the game was found out Parnell had fairly won the rubber. He started with the Prisons Bill, and he had an excellent case. Bigger and he fixed on the vexed question of the differentiation of political and ordinary prisoners. Upon that question the obstructionists were certain to have some measure of English sympathy, nor were they likely to be quite alone in a House where there were at least some enlightened Liberals when they enlarged the scope of their activities so as to humanise the clauses of the Bill, irrespective of the type of prisoner involved. This was scarcely obstruction at all, and, as a matter of fact, he did succeed in improving the measure. It was high time, he said at one point, for England to remove the reproach from her that she treated political prisoners worse than any other State, and he went on, in a way that would have made M. Rochefort smile grimly, to explain the consideration with which the French Government had treated the Communards. Then we find him once more harping on the Fenians. "When history comes to be written," he averred, "there is nothing for which the children of Englishmen now living would blush as much as for the treatment of the men convicted in 1865." The Attorney-General for the Government conceded some of his demand. But reasonable as was such advocacy upon such themes it was easily possible to carry it too far, and when Mr. Bigger began to move the adjournment of the House after every clause even friendly Englishmen deserted.

Parnell next set his eye on the Mutiny Bill, and again proved his extraordinary astuteness. The Mutiny Bill is a regular yearly measure. It may be said, speaking rather roughly, and with the requisite apologies to Bagehot, that it keeps the army alive. It had not been challenged or even discussed within living memory; to impede its progress to the Statute Book for even a single hour would have been regarded as imperilling the safety of the State. But Parnell again fastened on points upon which he was certain to stir humanitarian feelings in the breasts of some, at least, of the English members. That was a factor on which he very evidently set great store. It could never be obstruction if his action found support on the English benches. On the Mutiny Bill he was able to raise the question of flogging in the army and navy, and the whole problem, in fact, of punishment in the sister services. Needless to say, these were topics on which even English members had views, and as to flogging, the Irish guerilla found himself reinforced by

so notable a fighter as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, with the result that the abolition of flogging soon became a plank in the Liberal platform.

The South African Bill for the absorption of the Transvaal was Parnell's next quarry, and here he was indeed in clover, because certain of influential support from the Liberal and Radical benches.

By the time these three measures had got well on their way the object of Parnell and Bigger had fairly dawned on most of the members at both sides of the House. It is true that many of their proposals and speeches were reasonable enough, but they did not really want to be reasonable at all, though it was all to the good when they could so far manage to impose on the Legislature. But very many of their motions were merely dilatory, and many of their speeches were full of irritating irrelevancies and excruciating repetitions. Worse than all, the sittings began to lengthen to an intolerable hour in the morning. Tempers were not made for this sort of thing. The Parliamentary "scene" was brought to a right royal birth though the London and British Press, which ought to have seen a mint of money in it, did not seem a bit thankful to the Irish obstructionists.

The howl in the House was taken up by the English newspapers, and was in no way unacceptable to Parnell and his few comrades. He had the better of every round in the fight, especially when his antagonists lost their temper, as they did early in the fray. The story of this memorable session has been told often. It has had the advantage of chroniclers who witnessed its most notable incidents, and in some cases actually participated in them. In the vivid pages of Mr. T. P. O'Connor it has been described with singular power and vivacity. It is only necessary to add here one or two of the episodes which have left their mark on the British Legislature.

On July 25th an encounter occurred of the kind in which Parnell revelled. It began amongst the English themselves, and this was completely to his taste. On the South African Bill, one English member accused another of abusing the forms of the House. The accused repudiated the charge, and moved that the words be taken down. Parnell came cunningly to the Englishman's assistance. He seconded this motion, adding: "I think the limits of forbearance have been passed in regard to the language which honourable members opposite have thought proper to address to me and to those who act with me." Parliament is occasionally very touchy. Most of us, however thin-skinned, could stand that

icy rebuke without boiling. But it cannot be forgotten that Parnell had been goading the assembly since the previous February. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, jumped to his feet, and moved that these words be taken down. The greatest botches are excited statesmen. There was a prior motion before the House, but all his opponents rushed to the conclusion that Parnell had been cornered at last, and in the hurry to catch and flay him alive, the Chairman of Committees most irregularly jostled out the motion already pending by declaring that the words to which it appertained were not disorderly, and not content with one error of judgment, he proceeded to imagine an offence which Parnell had not even been accused of having committed. He called upon him to withdraw his statement "accusing honourable members of the House of intimidation." Parnell, in place of withdrawing, began an explanation, which was nothing more or less than a speech against the Bill. The air was filled with coughs and cries. A running fire of conversation accompanied his remarks. But on he went, until he succeeded in dragging Ireland into his explanation. "As an Irishman," he ended up, "coming from a country which has experienced to its full extent the result of English interference in its affairs and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, I feel a special satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect to this Bill." The House by this time was ready to believe anything of Parnell. No conclusion as to his conduct was grotesque enough to be avoided. A yell of anger went up from the indignant members; a yell not unmingled with satisfaction. The offender had surely this time left himself no loophole for escape. The Chancellor sprang forward with an impetuosity which became neither his age nor position, and while all parties discharged cheers of approval, again moved that the words last used by Parnell be taken down. The chaotic irregularities which were proposed and accepted are the very best index to the distraction and perplexity which six months of the young Irishman's operations had produced in the Mother of Parliaments. Mr. Speaker was sent for, and the Chancellor at once moved the suspension of Parnell from his legislative functions until the Friday following. Mr. Speaker called upon Parnell to explain, but the House had learned to know that his explanations were, if possible, more exasperating than his obstruction, of which, indeed, they were an indispensable adjunct. Parnell on this occasion, however, saw that he had the House and Government in the very deuce of a fix. He was willing to change the

word "satisfaction" into "interest"; otherwise he repeated "his condemnation of the Government policy." Successive English Governments had thought they could bully and oppress with impunity. He was promptly called to order, and he sat down, remarking that he condemned the policy of the Government, and would continue to thwart it as far as he was able. He at once withdrew, and went up to the gallery of the House to gloat down upon its abject and ludicrous humiliation. An English member was the first to perceive the egregious blunder into which their passion had betrayed the Minister and the assembly. "I am sure," he said, "the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not contend that the member for Meath should be punished because he wished to thwart the intentions of the Government." The fat was in the fire. The motion to suspend Parnell was instantly adjourned until Friday, and the triumphant culprit, escorted by the bugbear Bigger, returned to his place on the floor of the House, and calmly resumed his speech on the Bill. The motion for suspension was never heard of again. A lot of shamefaced schoolboys could not have been more anxious to hide away an awkward business.

It was clear that things could not be allowed to go on as they had been going since Parliament met in February. Business had been unconscionably delayed. The Government time-table had proved a delusion and a sham. The rules of the House had been used to disconcert all its proceedings. Nothing was now regarded as a formality. Tired-out elderly gentlemen were kept busy recording votes on ridiculous motions by Mr. Joe Bigger. The stream of irrelevant and uneloquent discourse flowed on and on. Important measures meandered to the Statute Book with pitiful slowness. Worse than all, no member coming down to the House could be sure of the hour at which he would get to bed. And all this because of a handful of Irish intruders. The time was ripe for decisive action.

Therefore, on the Friday upon which the suspension motion was to have been taken up, the Chancellor of the Exchequer came down with the new rules for the prevention of obstruction. The historian of Parliament must ever regard July 27, 1877, as one of the most fateful days in the annals of the Legislature. It was the first shearing of the privileges of debate, though the initial proposals were modest in the extreme. The first of the two new rules provided that a member twice declared out of order might be suspended, and the second that the motion "to report progress" (Bigger's

most beloved weapon) could only be moved once by the same member in the same debate. Resistance was useless. The House was determined to grapple with the problem. It is to the credit of the Government that they were so moderate in their remedies. They could have got almost any powers they asked for. Parnell bowed to the inevitable, but he spoke a personal defence so clever and challenging that it looks perfectly unanswerable. He said he had been denounced for his action on the Prisons Bill. Well, what was the fact? More clauses had been carried on his motion than by all the Conservatives put together. More than this. These clauses were admitted to be so useful that he was actually informed that if he confined himself to such amendments, and if he continued to discuss measures in that way, he would be playing a beneficial part in the work of the House. Then there was the Mutiny Bill. At first he got such meagre support for his amendments that the House was empty, and did not hear them. Besides, prepared as they were in the course of debate, they were, perhaps, imperfectly constructed. He had no recourse but to return to them when the Bill reached its next stage. What was the result? Why, he was supported by 140 or 150 members, including the whole of the Opposition front bench. Was this obstruction? The *suppressio veri* has never been more adroitly used. The new rules were adopted. Matters went from bad to worse. Four days later five Irishmen, including Parnell and Bigger, kept the House sitting for twenty-six consecutive hours. All through the evening and night, amid continual scenes of angry disorder, the little band went on wasting time. The five indomitable freelances took up the work in relays. They were denounced and interrupted, threats and cajoleries were tried in vain. Bigger excelled himself. At eight o'clock in the morning he told the House he had had a long sleep and a good breakfast, and was ready to resume his labours. Parnell all through maintained an unconquerable calmness and an unruffled courtesy as exasperating as any invective could well be. At length physical exhaustion stopped the combat. The Bill became an Act. Mr. Barry O'Brien mentions that all through the unprecedented sitting "there was one occupant of the Ladies' Gallery who never deserted her post—Miss Fanny Parnell."

CHAPTER XII.

SEIZING THE REINS.

IT did not need much political perspicacity to see that a crisis was coming in Butt's Home Rule movement. The Parliamentary proceedings of Parnell and Biggar met with emphatic disfavour from the old leader. He was, indeed, too extreme a constitutionalist. He did respect Parliamentary institutions, and he had very pronounced ideas about the dignity attaching to membership of the Commons. He was a genial, kindly, tolerant soul. He could not bear to see even his enemies wince. Added to which, there could not have been any two opinions as to the disregard of Parnell and Biggar for his feelings and wishes. To put it quite bluntly, they flouted his leadership in the face of Parliament and the country. He would have been more than human, and he was, in fact, one of the most human of mortals, did he not feel their indiscipline and indifference most keenly. Nor could there be any justification for them except the urgent necessity of the nation. There is, however, no need to mince words over what was, and is, as plain as the noon-day sun—Parnell had already decided to take the Irish cause in hand, and to push Isaac Butt aside. There may be many opinions as to the mode in which these aims were accomplished. Butt's services to Ireland had been undeniably great and conspicuous. His honesty was as fixed and certain as the sun. His sacrifices were comparable with O'Connell's, probably more devastating to his private fortunes, and we can now see clearly enough that but for Isaac Butt, Parnell would have had no mission. Besides, the lovable old man had welcomed the raw recruit with open arms and swelling heart. "My dear boy," he said in characteristic fashion to Mr. Barry O'Brien, "we have got a splendid recruit, an historic name, my friend, young Parnell, from Wicklow; and unless I am mistaken, the Saxon will find him an ugly customer, though he is a good-looking fellow." Alas! he proved too ugly a customer for Butt's taste as well. Some of those who made names for themselves under the ægis of Parnell mingled with their praise of Butt sprinklings of odium. It is possible to do full justice to the rising without mocking the spots on the setting sun. Few of those who have come after him have been worthy to fasten the greaves on the grand old

gladiator. He was now nearing the grave. A disease of the heart menaced his footsteps. Troubles circled his venerable head. His public labours had wrecked his professional affairs. He was often harrassed by that most annoying of all worries—the want of ready money. The leader of a great movement, he was not seldom in the power of an insignificant creditor. He might have been both rich and happy. He had chosen drudgery and embarrassment, and something not easily distinguishable from misery, because he loved Ireland. No man ever deserved the kindest consideration at the hands of his fellow-countrymen more than he. It would be better for the personal fame of Parnell had he been more conscious of that fact. His methods with regard to Butt were summary and uncompromising. He lived to know how a great leader feels when the scorpions of ingratitude whip him.

Butt made one glaring mistake. He was temperamentally averse from such disagreeable and subversive tactics as Parnell had adopted. He cannot be blamed for not seeing that the young member was obviously right. His own personal experience in the House ought to have taught him the futility of the old style, but it is not because a course is obviously the right one that all wise men will recognise the judiciousness of following it. Besides, Butt had a party so curiously composed that he was for ever fearful lest even consistent moderation might prove too strong a draught for them. He was not, in fact, his own master, and he was past the age when risks have charms. But he might have kept his mind to himself, or he might have administered rebuke in the privacy of the party. Out of many alternative courses of action he chose the very worst. His unpardonable mistake was that he broke with Parnell; reproved, denounced and disassociated himself from him in the face and hearing, nay, it almost seemed, at the behest of the English enemy. "I regret," he said on one occasion, "that the time of the House has been wasted in this miserable and wretched discussion. If at this hour of the night any member really wished to propose a serious amendment I would support the motion to 'report progress,' but when there was no amendment to a number of clauses, I must express my disapproval of the course taken by the honourable member for Meath. It is a course of obstruction, and one against which I must enter my protest. I am not responsible for the member for Meath, and cannot control him." That was the true and sufficient explanation of the position on the Irish benches. Butt could not control Parnell. Parnell did not mean to allow himself to be controlled. He had the right end of the stick, and he knew it.

On this occasion he only vouchsafed a simple sentence in reply, but that simple sentence was a stinging snub. "The honourable and learned gentleman was not in the House when I attempted to explain why I had not put down notice of my amendments." At three o'clock in the morning, during one of the all-night sittings in July, Butt again denounced the obstructionists.

Parnell himself had already put down his estimate of the situation in black and white. In a letter to Dr. Kenny, afterwards member for one of the divisions of Dublin City, he wrote:—"It is best to let Mr. Bigger, myself and others work along quietly for the present. If Butt can only be induced to let us alone, we are quite equal to the task we have set ourselves, which is not a very difficult one." An acrimonious correspondence in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal* had served to widen the breach between the two men. When a quarrel gets into the newspapers even an archangel will scarcely patch it up. The letters were as argumentative and dextrous as such inky contests usually are, but except for a simple passage, in which Parnell developed his view of the House of Commons, they are of comparatively little use to the biographer and historian. "I cannot sympathise with your conclusions," he wrote, "as to my duty towards the House of Commons. If Englishmen insist on the artificial maintenance of an antiquated institution which can only perform a portion of its functions by the 'connivance' of those entrusted with its working, and the imperfect and defective performance of even that portion—if the continued working of this institution is constantly attended with much wrong and hardship to my country, as frequently it has been the source of gross cruelty and tyranny—I cannot consider it my duty to connive in the imperfect performance of these functions, while I should certainly not think of obstructing any useful, solid or well-performed work."

The all-important fact of the moment was that Parnell's extraordinary performances in the House were almost universally applauded by the masses of the Irish people. They positively delighted the Fenians, who saw, with nothing but satanic satisfaction, the browbeating of the British Parliament by a handful of Irish braves. That is all Parnell cared about. It was the Irish people and their support that were all along uppermost in his mind. Nor can I emphasise too strongly that the policy he had chosen was no chance affair, had nothing of mere opportunism about it, but was in truth a deliberate policy, worked out with full apprehension of its possibilities and probabilities, for the main purpose of

securing the allegiance of the nationalists of Ireland. Men like Parnell know quite well there is leadership in them. When he had once clearly realised it in his own case he was ruthless in securing its recognition by the nation at large.

To secure this recognition was now his absorbing concern. The Fenians in England had for seven years given loyal support to Butt's Home Rule movement. Mainly through the efforts of Mr. John Barry, afterwards a member of the Irish Party, and who was a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, they had agreed to give the Home Rule movement a chance. Nor does it appear that their adherence was at all half-hearted, although they had no unquestioning belief in the chances of success. At the period at which we have now arrived they had, indeed, lost faith in Butt. Patience had stood the strain for seven years. The snapping point had come.

It was at this psychological moment, as it would be called in the jargon of our time, that Parnell sought out the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain. He had been continuously cultivating Fenian sympathies. Twice during the Parliamentary session he had most pointedly referred to the Fenian prisoners, a question, he declared, on which the Irish people could go to extremities as they could not go on any other question. He urged especially that they should be kept apart from other convicts. His path was now clear, and he asked Mr. John Barry frankly to get him a platform. "I must show that I have something at my back"—that was the thoroughly understandable way he put it. Mr. Barry obliged him. He arranged thirteen meetings, to Parnell's dismay, for he had the quaintest and most weird superstitions, and insisted upon one of the thirteen meetings being abandoned, or a fourteenth being tacked on.

His first campaign began at Glasgow on May 29, 1877. Are the Irish people for peace and conciliation, or for hostility and war, he asked; were they for making things convenient for England, or for advancing English interests? If so, they would have to get some other member for Meath. In July he reached Manchester, and his theme was just the same. "I do not believe in a policy of conciliation of English feeling or English prejudices." Why were the tithes abolished? How did O'Connell win Emancipation? When was "the English Church in Ireland" (mark how he put it) disestablished? Why was the Land Act passed? These were his historical illustrations, and it was with something like a personal pride his audience heard him exclaim that the Church was disestablished and the tenants were given some

measure of protection because a lock was shot off a prison van at Manchester.

With Bigger he travelled to Dublin, in August. A great meeting in the historic Round Room of the Rotunda practically settled Parnell's leadership. His speech was badly delivered, but it was just the kind of speech the gathering, mostly Fenians and sympathisers with Fenianism, wanted to hear. "I care nothing for the English Parliament and its outcries," he declared. "I care nothing for its existence, if that existence is to continue a source of tyranny and destruction to my country." He had only to live up to that declaration and he would be the leader before the year was out. But there was no fear for him. He never once looked back. The annual meeting of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, of which Butt was President, was due in September. Parnell knew it. He had evidently determined that this was to be the starting point of his formally accepted leadership. He was already leader in all but name.

One night he again sought out Mr. John Barry, whom he had found so reliable. The scene which ensued is one of such historical importance, and throws such a flood of light upon Parnell's character and methods, that we are under an eternal debt of gratitude to Mr. Barry O'Brien for having rescued it from oblivion. Throughout the chat he spoke with suppressed energy, as if at once forcing and holding back his words. At one moment his arms were outstretched, at another his fists were tightly clenched. He had his clear, piercing eyes fixed on Barry all the time, as if he were searching him through and through. These were the fateful words he spoke: "I think there must be quite a new departure in our party. We are only at the beginning of an active forward policy; but it must be pushed to extremes. A few men in the House of Commons can do nothing unless they are well supported in the country. Something striking must be done. Your organisation must do something striking. You must show plainly you mean to stand by the active men in the House of Commons."

He could not have put it more plainly. It did not need the keen intelligence of Mr. Barry to know what he meant. He took the hint. The Confederation met. Butt scented what was in the air. He resolved to break his own fall as best he could; insisted on resigning; and Parnell was elected President. Before that, however, he had spoken, on a vote of thanks to the old man, a speech which sounds harsh under the circumstances of the case, and illustrates his unbending, uncompromising character. "I must confess," he began,

“ to not having Mr. Butt’s confidence in English justice or sense of right. It is not too late for him to see a way to deal with England that will obtain freedom for our country—a way that will show England that, if she dare to trifle with Irish demands, it will be at the risk of endangering those institutions she feels so proud of, but which Irishmen have no reason to respect. To Mr. Butt is due a debt of gratitude by the Irish people which they can never repay, for he has taught them self-reliance and knowledge of their power. If I have felt it my duty to put myself in antagonism with Mr. Butt I hope he will forgive me. If I have said or written harsh things, I have never said more nor less than was due to the gravity of the occasion.”

Parnell was elected President. Butt found an excuse to leave the meeting hall. Barry followed him. He wished to tell him why he had been deposed. He approached with a word of sorrow for what could not be helped. The old champion turned to him. His eyes were wet. “ I never thought the Irish in England would do this to me,” he said. They shook hands and parted. Friend and foe alike now knew the Irish had pinned their faith to Parnell and his policy. He had hoisted himself into the leadership on the shoulders of the Fenians.

The next few weeks resembled in their fiery and fevered energy the tragic and tumultuous months at the close of his great career. He flew over England and Scotland, from Staffordshire to Kilmarnock, and thence to Greenock, everywhere sounding the same stern note—if the Irish people stood behind him he cared not for English threats. His name was now on every lip in Ireland.

CHAPTR XIII.

CHIEF AND TRIBUNE MEET.

THE morning of Wednesday, December 19, 1877, a warder approached Davitt at the wringing machine in the wash-house at Dartmoor and told him to put on his jacket and follow. He thought that at long last he was going to have a visit. He was brought to the governor’s room. “ Davitt,” said the governor, “ on several occasions I have spoken to you about how good conduct in prison is rewarded, and I am very happy to say that the Secretary of State has taken your case

into consideration, and I have now the pleasure of telling you that your good conduct has met with its reward. I have received a communication from the Secretary of State to the effect that you are to be discharged on a ticket-of-leave for the remaining portion of your sentence." Turning to the warder, he said : " Let him be photographed, and send him off at once." He was given a suit of clothes, £3, and the ticket-of-leave, taken to the railway station, and sent off to London.

Davitt was nearly being overlooked by the leaders of the Amnesty movement, and it was to Isaac Butt, who remembered his case, that his release was primarily due. He had been seven years and seven months in prison. He was thirty-one years of age. He had still just about thirty years of life in front of him. His sufferings were not yet done with, but he did not know that, and the muddy streets of London must have seemed a paradise that December day. He knows not freedom who has never lost it. Yet one of the first things he did after his release was to rejoin the Fenian Brotherhood, of the Supreme Council of which he was subsequently a member. When they set Davitt free the Government let loose ruin on the Irish landlords. And they had freed him in the nick of time. Everything was ready, or would shortly be, for the conjunction of a great agrarian leader with the great political chief. Nemesis was going to work thoroughly on this occasion.

The first glimpse we got of Davitt after his arrival in London is not very creditable to his fellow-countrymen. There was a respectable Home Rule Association which held its meetings at Westminster. One night while it was in session a man identified with Fenianism put his head in at the door and vanished. Ten minutes later he returned, bringing with him " a dark, delicate young fellow." " Here," he said somewhat abruptly, " is Michael Davitt, who has just been released from Dartmoor." Davitt was asked to sit down. He was evidently not wanted there, and after a time went away with his friend. When they had gone somebody said : " What the devil does that fellow mean by bringing this Davitt with him?" There was another present who did not view the affair in that light. " You need not turn up your nose," he said, " at a man who has suffered seven years penal servitude for Ireland, whether you agree with him or not." Davitt soon found himself where he was more welcome.

Three other Fenian prisoners were released the same time as Davitt—Colour-Sergeant McCarthy, Corporal Chambers,

and Private John O'Brien, all of whom had been in the English Army spreading the republican propaganda. They all crossed to Ireland on January 5, 1878. Parnell stood on the pier at Kingstown to greet them. Chief and Tribune met for the first time. It was the first time Davitt had seen his native land since he had gone into exile with his mother, a quarter of a century before. The whole party went on to Dublin. When they emerged from the railway terminus at Westland Row it was noted that cheers for Parnell were raised as loudly and as frequently as cheers for Davitt and his comrades. "Mr. Parnell, M.P.," thus did the *Freeman's Journal* sedately chronicle the fact, "was recognised within the station and was heartily cheered."

The procession through the streets and past the Old Parliament House is one of the writer's earliest and most vivid recollections. Even at the distance of nine-and-thirty years the impression of that huge mass of torchlights, making the winter night ruddy and jubilant, remains fresh and vivid. A city which had seen many of the greatest popular demonstrations of the century had seldom been the scene of any more impressive than this. Along two miles of streets an eager concourse pressed and sweltered in the crisp, cold night. A procession, lighted up with thousands of flambeaux and accompanied by the city bands, waited in suppressed and eager excitement the arrival of the men who had lain so long in prison. In front of the Old Parliament House, the enduring symbol of the nation's aspiration, where the Volunteers had demanded free trade, and won it to the boom of the cannon, and where now the statue of the illustrious Grattan stood beside the arena of his triumphs, an enormous gathering assembled to bring the welcome to a thrilling climax at the most historic spot within the city. It was a spectacle never to be forgotten.

The four liberated prisoners reached Westland Row Terminus to find the city thus thronged and ready to greet them. The railway platform had been invaded by the people, and the overwhelming enthusiasm which burst out when they were seen almost led to tragic results. The prisoners were unused to such tempestuous excitement. Years of suffering had broken their health. They looked sorry objects of such turbulent popular acclaim. The crowd rushed at them with a boisterous and inopportune vigour, seized them by the hands, and literally overpowered them with demonstrative attentions. It was impossible to make a passage for them. They had to be smuggled through the railway carriage to a waiting-room, and here came the first indication that the unfortunate

fellows were in no fit state to endure such intense jubilation. McCarthy grew faint and collapsed. The joyful ordeal was too much for his remaining strength.

The passage of the procession escorting the four heroes to the old European Hotel in Bolton Street, no longer in existence, was a triumphal march. Davitt and his three comrades were drawn along in a waggonette, and wherever it passed the people went almost wild in their enthusiastic delight. None of the four men was personally well known to his fellow-countrymen in Ireland, and Davitt perhaps least of all. They had had no public career beyond that which their trials had given them, and Davitt had not been in Ireland since childhood. But the extraordinary demonstration was all the more significant the less it was inspired by personal attachment and acquaintance. It was, indeed, a great act of fidelity to the cause of Irish nationhood, and of admiration for the courage and unselfish patriotism of the Fenian Brotherhood. The terrible sufferings of the men, already partly known to the public, also evoked the keen sympathies of the populace. The occasion was celebrated in other parts of the country as well. Bonfires brightened many a hill top and many a market square.

But Davitt had not yet found his real mission. He was a stranger to the new movement which had grown up since he sank out of sight of the world in the dock at the Old Bailey. He had met Parnell on Irish soil, and though no one could have imagined it that evening, it was the most momentous episode of a memorable occasion. For several years to come the destinies of the two men were to be woven together almost inextricably. It was a unique and most curious as well as most fruitful conjunction of totally dissimilar talents and temperaments.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARNELL AND DAVITT—A CONTRAST.

PARNELL and Davitt tend to become legendary figures. Parnell has been dead nearly a quarter of a century, and Davitt close upon a decade, and there are thousands upon thousands of Irishmen now at man's estate who never saw or heard one or the other of them, and to whom they are already dim historical figures, perhaps somewhat incomprehensible, and,

in a sense, almost unknown. That at first sight may seem strange to those who knew them and listened to them, and, for all that has been said about the enigma of Parnell's personality, knew them, at any rate, fairly well. In all Irish history there is not a more extraordinary contrast than that presented by Parnell and Davitt. Each created simultaneously a movement here in Ireland, and both movements have been the most successful ever witnessed on Irish or any other soil. They created the two movements out of the very same material, precisely at the same moment. This is an extraordinary fact. It is true, indeed, that the Home Rule movement and the Land movement were in existence before Parnell and Davitt came on the scene; but, for all that, they were virtually the creators of them—because both movements, as far as we can judge, would have died without them; died, that is to say, for the time being. Each took up a dying movement and brought it to new life—nurtured and strengthened it, and ensured its ultimate success. Nor do I forget that the Home Rule movement and the Land movement became intimately associated, the one with the other. There is no need to point out that Parnell did deliberately tack on the Land movement to the Home Rule movement, and thereafter became the leader of both. Yet they were movements wholly distinct, and Davitt never really ceased to be leader in the one sphere, despite the overmastering leadership of Parnell on the National question. That is the extraordinary fact—that two movements, wholly distinct, dependent upon different factors, making, on the surface at any rate, a totally dissimilar appeal, the one based in no small degree on a sentimental appeal, the other on imperious material considerations, that these two great diverse movements were built up successfully upon the self-same people, by these two men at the same time.

There is scarcely a parallel for this to be found in the history of any other country. In most places one thing at a time is sufficient, especially when it is one big thing. But here the nation proved equal to two enormous tasks, plying them together. There is not a better example in Irish history of the assimilative power of the Irish, nor one in which their talent for co-ordinate organisation, as well as their inexhaustible pluck, their heedlessness of risk, their varied energy when aroused, their curious clannishness in face of necessity, their tenacious loyalty to ideas and persons, and their correct appreciation of political tactics and strategy were more strikingly demonstrated. It would not have been a wonder had they failed with two huge irons in the fire; but

they succeeded, and not only succeeded, but won almost from the very beginning, and completed the dual victory within an incredibly short space of time. I do not think that any serious and sagacious political thinker will deny that the Irish have won, and won finally, not only on the Land question, but on the question of Self-Government as well. I am not concerned with any small, final adjustments, with any little arrangements, that may perhaps delay somewhat the complete operation of the victories. The principles involved have triumphed, have been sufficiently accepted by all the most influential parties involved, and have received, to all intents and purposes, full legislative sanction. That is what any man of common-sense will call victory. Above all, it is victory, because it has rendered a return to the old regime, which Parnell and Davitt assailed, wholly and absolutely impossible.

But the most curious circumstance of the great episode, which lasted through more than an entire generation of Irishmen, is the strange contrast of the two leaders, who had to appeal to, work with, and build upon just the same people, for the same identical people constituted the two movements. The Home Rule movement took in the whole nation, urban and rural, and the Land movement would not have been the success it was but that the Irish of the cities and towns involved themselves, or became involved in it. Parnell, an aristocrat; Davitt, a peasant. Parnell, bearing visibly a noble lineage; Davitt, with the marks of hard toil and cruel fate upon him. Parnell, in his young energy, unimpaired by trouble or privation; Davitt, young, too, but wrecked by the horrors of the jail. Parnell, touched with the culture of one of the ancient universities; Davitt, his own teacher at stolen moments. Parnell, with an old and historic right to political prominence in Ireland; Davitt, whose origin was lost in the confused history of the common people. These are some points of the contrast, but they do not nearly exhaust a subject which is calculated to fascinate the psychologist almost as much as the historian and the student of political upheavals.

It was character that told in both cases; and when we examine beneath the surface we find even more remarkable dissimilarities, even more striking opposites, in the two men. There is really no reliable way to judge character except by the analysis of deeds, and whether at rest or in action these two figures were totally different. Parnell was a block of ice; Davitt was a furnace of passion. Yet it is very doubtful if Davitt was not the one who held himself in greater control.

Parnell was, indeed, a reticent man, of few words, and those strictly to the point; while Davitt was voluble and discursive, eloquent, and occasionally picturesque of speech. But, if anything, the difference demonstrated that the pure Gael held himself in greater discipline and command than the Anglo-Irishman; for no practice could make Parnell spontaneously fluent, while, with his cosmopolitan interests and his rhetorical faculty, it must have been no easy matter for Davitt to obtain the concentration of thought and expression which he actually accomplished. Both men had grim determination of character, but it sprang from different causes in each. In Parnell, it was largely due to a remorseless racial distrust; in Davitt, to an almost fanatical enmity to injustice of all kinds. Parnell was suspicious of the English; Davitt rather liked the English people, but he hated English wrongdoing just as he hated wrongdoing everywhere. It is here, in fact, that we have the great leading difference between the two men. Parnell was dedicated to the concrete, and had to have something tangible upon which to direct his energy. Davitt, on the other hand, could feel an abstraction deeply. No man of his time was more devoted to ideas as distinct from facts, and even the prosaic works to which he applied his powers became sentiments, emotions, idealisations, to his fancy, and not seldom in his speech. Both men had their defects, and, where they were important, these were sometimes curiously alike. Both were shy men, and, like all shy men, at times thoughtlessly impulsive; but this was of less harm to Parnell, whose ideas were few, and could be marshalled handily, and whose interests were simple, and could always be kept uppermost in his mind; while, in the case of Davitt, the profusion of his thoughts and the multitude of his sentimental commitments, made rashness, deliberate or involuntary, a deadly peril. Both knew very well the ascendancy of the kind makes men resentful of opposition, however just and reasonable. They were both imperious in command. Neither could play second fiddle, even though without one the orchestra would have to stop; and, above all, neither could play second to the other. They were in very different ways, and for very different reasons, essentially proud intellects; and that, in spite of the fact that each could be the most affable and alluring man in a company. Their condescension was essentially the condescension of great men, who were alive to the superiority of their minds, the nobility of their purposes, and the dominance of their power. Ireland never possessed two such spirits at the one moment. That

she was equal to the apparition is one of the most extraordinary facts of modern political history.

I think it is pretty certain that they did not like each other. Mr. Arthur Lynch relates that he spoke with Davitt of Parnell. Davitt said: "Parnell's ascendancy had meant the downfall of Irish politics. He had not been a great force. He was a cold-blooded sensualist; there was a great deal of self in his career in Irish politics; his dictatorship was a regrettable episode in Irish life, and one which he hoped would never again be repeated." Considering the intimacy of their identification with Ireland at a seething time, and the apparent similarity of their aims and objects, they seemed to keep, and did keep, strangely apart, as if there were a weird suspicion between them. But such misunderstandings are the very commonplaces of history, and do not necessarily affect its opinion of great men, who handle each other with the roughness of giants. Ireland owes an enormous debt to both, and she will write her judgment of them without regard to their personal repulsions. It is, perhaps, not far from the mark to say that they mutually completed each other in their work, and that Davitt and Parnell were both indispensable in the circumstances of the case. Without Davitt, the Irish peasant would have remained longer in the grip of Babylon; without Parnell, the Irish citizen would still be a political Ishmael.

CHAPTER XV.

CONSTITUTIONALISM *versus* PHYSICAL FORCE.

THE transactions which have now to be narrated, though amongst the most important in the history of modern Ireland, are still not a little obscure. It is to be regretted that the correspondence and literary remains of Michael Davitt have not yet been sifted and given to the world. It is impossible that they would not illuminate this period of our history in a way that no other documentary testimony could. Nor is it easy to justify the delay. We have reached a new era, and the archives of the preceding one justly belong to us. In the absence of such help, the biographer and historian must feel themselves at a disadvantage; but time presses, and if great figures in our annals and important events are not to become clothed with myth, it is necessary to work on the

period with what materials are available, leaving to more fortunate writers in the future the work of correcting and supplementing where necessary that which is set down under obvious difficulties.

The period was ushered in with a tragedy—it was little else than a tragedy from first to last. Two days after the wonderful reception of the liberated convicts in Dublin, Parnell, who was continually cultivating acquaintances amongst the Fenians, invited them to breakfast with him at Morrison's Hotel, in Dawson Street, a place where he constantly stayed, and which has long since disappeared. While waiting near the breakfast room poor McCarthy, who had swooned away at Westland Row the night of his arrival in the city, was seen to stagger. He was helped to a sofa, and in a few moments was dead. He had been twelve years in prison. His punishment had been like Davitt's. Parnell was greatly shocked at the occurrence, which, indeed, lacked no circumstance of pathos to wring a heart sensitive to suffering. The young Wicklow aristocrat witnessed the final act of the martyrdom with intense pain. His antipathy to England was not softened by the sad spectacle. But events began to stir quickly. Later in the month a Home Rule Conference sat for two days. Rumours had spread that it would be the occasion of a trial of strength between Butt and Parnell, although the ostensible motive of the promoters was to soothe the differences between the two sections. A wider breach was, however, averted at a preliminary meeting, when a compromise, of which Parnell had if anything the better, was arranged. Accordingly, while the leadership of Mr. Butt was reaffirmed, united and energetic action was resolved upon, and certain liberties of individual action were countenanced under the pious resolution that any course injurious to the unity of the Home Rule Party in Parliament was to be avoided. Such compromises are worthless. Political loopholes thus sanctioned merely invite dissension. This was a matter which could only be settled by the victory or defeat of Parnell. Parnell realised that fact quite clearly, and there was no small measure of impudence and audacity in the way in which he accepted what he knew perfectly well was nothing more than a respite granted to a set of politicians almost certain to disappear before long into private life. "If I refrain from asking the country to-day by the voice of this Conference," he said, "to adopt any particular line of action or any particular policy, or to put any definite issue in reference to it before this Conference, I do so solely because I am young and can wait." Mr. Butt is reported to have inter-

jected "Hear, hear," but nuances perish in the records of the stenographer. "And because," Parnell went on to say, "I believe the country can also wait; and that the country which has waited so long can wait a little longer." It was possible, nay, very probable, that Mr. Butt would succeed in persuading fair-minded Englishmen to redress Irish grievances by following the methods he had chosen, but he did not think the House of Commons was composed mainly of fair-minded Englishmen. "We are dealing," he concluded, "with political parties who really consider the interests of their political organisations as paramount beyond all other considerations." Parnell was an incomparable factionist. That was the end of the compromise, and it showed as clearly as possible that he would secede from Butt's Party when he had completed his arrangements for doing so.

We have some pen pictures of Parnell as he was at this time which will help us to complete our estimate of the man. Mr. Standish O'Grady saw him at one of Butt's meetings in the Rotunda, and describes him then as an "exquisite of some sort." Shortly afterwards the same talented writer saw him in the same place as he stood beside Bigger, after their first session of obstruction. "At last," he says, "a young man arose, the rigidity of whose back and the sternness of whose front left me no longer in doubt." "From the time when I made the acquaintance of Parnell," writes Mr. John Denvir, "when he came amongst us, a shy-looking young man, under the wing of Isaac Butt, we were drawn towards each other—he, because he looked upon me, from my life-long experience of them, as an authority on our people in this country (England); and I, because I was impressed by the terrible earnestness that I soon recognised underlying the young man's apparently impassive and unemotional exterior. I was one of the first he came in contact with in this country (England), and I believe he unbent himself, and showed more of his really enthusiastic nature to me than he did to most men. He used to speak unreservedly to me."

The House of Commons had learned the lesson of 1877 sufficiently well to understand that it must take steps to obviate a recurrence of the scenes which had exasperated the legislators, the press, and the people of England. A Select Committee was appointed to enquire into the question of obstruction, and, with characteristic acceptance of the matter of fact, Parnell was named a member of the Committee, probably as the greatest known expert on the problem to be resolved. What an astute and acute Parliamentarian he had become is strikingly demonstrated in the individual report he

constructed, but which his colleagues refused to endorse. It is scarcely possible to conceive a more plausible justification of his obstructive tactics than that contained in this ostensibly serious passage, with a broad grin in every line :—" The Committee cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the House of Commons is composed of several different nationalities, who sympathise little with the aspirations, and who understand less of the affairs, of each other. Considerable friction, heat, and ill-feeling are frequently engendered by the interference of members belonging to one nationality in the affairs of the others, with the result of delay, loss of time, and obstruction to the general progress of business. In addition, the affairs of Ireland and India are neglected, and the representatives of these two countries, if they attend the sittings of the House, find themselves in a position of enforced idleness unless they occupy themselves with English affairs, and so incur the risk of the illwill of the majority of the House." The reasoning and wording of this concise defence have all the cunning and subtlety of an " old Parliamentary hand."

The most pregnant events of the year originated in the United States of America. A good deal has been written on the subject and a good deal of mystery imported into it, but in reality it seems to have been, and most probably was, simple in the extreme, important though the results undoubtedly were. The American wing of the Fenian organisation had become known as the Clan-na-Gael, whose prestige has fallen considerably in recent years. It was founded and organised by a Mr. James Sheedy. Parnell's inspiring activities attracted the attention of these men. A new mode of attacking England for Ireland's benefit had been discovered, and it dawned on some of them that it was worth giving a trial to this ingenious, daring, and obviously practical experiment for the cause of Irish nationality. Some of the more ardent Fenians at home, Charles Kickham, the novelist, amongst them, had revolted against coquetting with constitutionalism, and, in fact, carried the day, with the result that Mr. John Barry resigned from the Supreme Council of the Brotherhood, while Mr. Bigger and Mr. Patrick Egan were expelled. There was a similar divergence of opinion in the Clan-na-Gael, but John Devoy, who had been one of the most energetic of the Fenian organisers in Dublin, and whose special work had been the enlistment of soldiers in the organisation, favoured a flirtation with the new constitutionalism.

Parnell had already been asked to join the Brotherhood. Mr. John Barry was deputed in 1877 to sound him on the

subject. He gave an unhesitating No. He would not argue the question. "Have patience with me. Give me a trial of three or four years," he pleaded; "then, if I cannot do anything, I must step aside. But give me a trial and have patience with me." He had no doubt he could turn the Parliamentary machine to good account. A year later another attempt was made to enrol him. Again he said "No. I think I can do good with the Parliamentary machine. I mean to try it, at all events. Purely physical force movements have always failed in Ireland. But I do not want to break up your movement; on the contrary, I wish it to grow. Collect arms, do everything that you are doing, but let the open movement have a chance, too. We can both help each other; but I am sure I can be of more use in the open movement." To Davitt, at St. Helens, in Lancashire, in May, 1878, he also said: "No; I will never join any political secret society, oath-bound or otherwise. My belief is that useful things for our cause can be done in the British Parliament." He was clear upon that point, but he did not yet see his way very far ahead. "I cannot explain how I am going to do it," he said; "but I am quite satisfied I can do it."

At the beginning of 1878 a conference took place in Craven Street, Strand, London, between Parnell, with some of his leading followers, and one of the chiefs of the American Fenians. Mr. Barry O'Brien, who heard an account of this remarkable meeting from one of those who had been present at it, says that Parnell "was mostly silent" during the conversation. It was found that the gulf between the Constitutionalists and the Republicans could not be spanned, at any rate, as the result of debate, nor did a further talk over the question with Parnell himself produce any better results. But Parnell's sphinx-like silence at the Craven Street meeting seems to have impressed the Fenians immensely.

There can be little doubt, notwithstanding this apparent irreconcilability, that many Fenians were awakening to the alpine obstacles which hindered the march of their ideas and confronted their projects. The effort in the 'sixties, under relatively favourable circumstances, had been a fiasco, and it was heartrending and discouraging in the extreme that all these revolutionary experiments merely resulted in escapes and rescues and amnesty agitations on behalf of Irish captives. Still the fervour of Irish patriotism was never stilled, and many of the adherents of physical force were restlessly and earnestly searching for a way out of the dilemma.

It was providentially opportune that Parnell's throttling of the House of Commons occurred at this moment, for it turned thoughts in the direction of constitutional agitation which might have been urged otherwise to more sinister courses than Fenianism had ever sanctioned.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAVITT IN AMERICA.

DAVITT's constitution was greatly impaired by his sufferings in prison. That he evidently recovered eventually a fair measure of strength and health was due to the toughness of his peasant fibre, his will power, and the activity and breadth of his sympathies. To the end of his days he felt the effects of his incarceration, but he was indomitable from head to foot, and his mind was ever eager and busy with affairs of many kinds. He was one of those men of diverse interests who can always pre-occupy themselves against that most damaging enemy of life—the memory of pain needlessly and unjustly inflicted upon them. In the first months of his freedom, however, he bore up only by the exercise of a will which nothing could bend or break. His physical weakness was sometimes painfully apparent to his friends. In April, 1878, with Corporal Chambers, he visited Liverpool, where he was well known in his boyhood days. At a meeting in the Adelphi Theatre he was given a most cordial reception, but it was noticed that as he spoke his left hand, held behind his back, was afflicted with a constant nervous twitching. After the meeting he was brought to the house of a patriotic Irishman, Mr. Patrick Byrne, and there he fell into a deep faint, from which he was with difficulty revived by Dr. Bligh, a Liverpool Nationalist, who chanced to be present. A week later he, as well as Parnell, was present at a meeting in St. Helens Theatre, and it was on that occasion that Davitt attempted to bring the new leader into the Fenian ranks.

Having, in June, given evidence before the Royal Commission on the working of the Penal Servitude system, Davitt left England, and landed at New York in August, 1878. His mother was then living in the old Quaker city of Philadelphia, and Davitt, intensely attached to her, wished to see her at the earliest possible moment. His father had died, and was buried in America. But his politics, or rather his patriotism, was half his being, and, as has been stated, he

had rejoined the Fenian Brotherhood immediately on his release from jail. He wished to meet the men of the Clann-na-Gael. The reader is already aware of the variable atmosphere which pervaded that organisation at this moment.

One of the causes which enabled Davitt to live through seven years of penal servitude was the extraordinary variety of the mental employment he created for himself in prison. It is astonishing to find in his literary works how broad was the range of his thoughts, how keen and scientific was the psychological concern he developed in his surroundings, and how calmly, dispassionately, and acutely he had reasoned on difficult political and social problems in the solitude of his dreary cell. In that prison literature, which is so weirdly fascinating and which has been enriched by the musings of men like Silvio Pellico, there is nothing more instructive and interesting than Davitt's record of his experiences, and the speculations he formed upon them. The problems of Ireland were never far from his thoughts, and amongst them, as was natural, the Irish Land question. The eviction of his father had been the beginning of Davitt's troubles. His mind must often have recurred to the scene of exile, an experience common to hundreds of thousands of Irish boys and girls.

The ripening of such questions is a subject of great interest to the political philosopher, but even the ordinary observer must often note how strangely political and agrarian and great social problems seem to burst suddenly into insistent life to become, as Gladstone once said, matters of practical politics. It was so with the Irish land question.

The *Irish World*, a paper founded in New York by Mr. Patrick Ford, who played a notable part in the Irish struggle of the next twenty years and more, had been for many a week now hammering at the question, and dinning in the principle of "the land for the people." Ford, like Fintan Lalor, saw the vital national importance of agrarian reform. Lalor held something bordering on contempt for O'Connell's Repeal demand. "A mightier question is the land," he wrote; "one beside which Repeal dwarfs down into a petty parish question; one on which Ireland may try, not her own right, but the right of the world; on which you would be not the asserter of old principles, often asserted, and better asserted before, but an original inventor and propounder and propagandist in the van of the earth, and leading the nations, in which Ireland's success or her failure would never be forgotten by man, but would make her for ever a lode-star of history, on which Ulster would be not on her flank, but at her side, and in which she need not plead in humble petitions

her beggarly wrongs, and how beggarly she bore them, nor plead any right save the right of her might. That the absolute allodial ownership of the lands of Ireland is vested of right in the people of Ireland, that they, and none but they, are the first land-owners and lords paramount, as well as the law-makers of this island, that all titles to one foot of Irish soil are invalid, not conferred or confirmed by them, these are my principles. The Land the People's—for that strip and bid Ireland strip. Unmuzzle the wolfhound. There is one at this moment in every cabin throughout the land, nearly fit already to be untied, and he will be savager by and by." That was the gospel according to the herculean cripple, James Fintan Lalor. It was a gospel with which the world is not nearly done as yet. It has passed round the earth. It has founded its own literature. It will establish its own empire by and by.

The *Irish World* is one of the first journals in the world which took Lalor's principles (with special application to Ireland) to its heart. Davitt visited Ford at the office of that historic paper shortly after he reached New York. A friendship which lasted till death was formed between them. In the course of a lecturing tour through the United States, which was an unqualified success, and brought badly-needed financial help to him, Davitt laid special stress on the urgency of the Irish Land problem. Speaking in Boston, in December, 1878, he concluded a very impressive speech, for he was naturally an eloquent man, with an apt parody of Moore's well-known lines—

"We want the land that bore us,
We'll make that cry our chorus;
And we'll have it yet, tho' hard to get,
By the heavens bending o'er us."

It was inevitable that Davitt should encounter John Devoy during this American tour. Devoy was perhaps the most prominent man associated with the constitutional evolution of Fenianism, and he, too, saw the importance and significance of the Irish land question, though from a different point of view. To all intents and purposes the Irish farming classes had always given Fenianism the cold shoulder. There were many reasons for this, and probably not the least potent, the censures of the Church on secret societies. In any event, conspiracy generates and propagates more naturally in the solitudes of crowded cities than in the countryside, where, however sparse the population, there are few secrets. Devoy thought the farmers could be drawn into the Fenian ranks

if agrarian reform were embodied in the national programme. Davitt and Devoy joined forces. Davitt states the agreement tersely : "The land of Ireland was to be made the basis of Irish nationality." It is now easy to see how right and how wrong Devoy's expectations were. To settle the political question without settling the agrarian difficulty was an obvious impossibility. No real statesman would have conceived such an absurdity. But it was no less grotesque to suppose that peasant proprietors who had been averse from republican doctrine in the days of the rent-roll would suddenly develop into revolutionaries when ownership had descended, like a blessing from heaven, upon them. Such, however, are the vagaries which enthusiasm imposes on thought.

In September, 1878, the two political evangelists challenged the Clan upon what came to be known as "the new departure." Devoy carried his proposals. It was resolved to work "for the complete overthrow of British domination" and for the abolition of the Irish landlord system. As a counsel of perfection it was set down, "that as the land of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland, the abolition of the foreign landlord system and the substitution of one by which the tiller of the soil will be fixed permanently upon it, and holding directly of the State, is the only true solution of the Irish land question, which an Irish Republic can alone effect." To the very end Davitt favoured the nationalisation of the land of Ireland, though, of course, he abandoned the idea of complete separation from the sister isle.

This new programme was launched publicly and formally at New York in October. Devoy claimed for it that it would sweep away constitutionalists, "who misrepresent us; and that it would give the Fenians control of all the representative bodies in Ireland, including the members of Parliament. I believe in Irish independence," he exclaimed; "but I don't believe it would be worth while to free Ireland if that foreign landlord system were left standing." He would sweep away every vestige of the English connection, no doubt, but "I think," he added, and it was the most significant and perhaps the only sensible thing he said, "I think we should in the meantime accept all measures tending to the prevention of arbitrary eviction, and the creation of a peasant proprietary as a step in the right direction."

Pontifically as Devoy spoke, he was shrewd enough to discern that if it did not lie then, it would soon, with Parnell to decide how much of this programme Ireland would adopt. Accordingly, the Clan-na-Gael having been won over to the

new idea, a cablegram was sent to Parnell, signed by Devoy, Dr. Carroll, Breslin, famous for his rescue work, General Millin, and Patrick Mahon. It was short, but comprehensive:—"The Nationalists here will support you on the following conditions: First, abandonment of a Federal demand, and substitution of a general declaration in favour of self-government; second, vigorous agitation of the land question on the basis of a peasant proprietary, while accepting concessions tending to abolition of arbitrary evictions; third, exclusion of all sectarian issues from the platform; fourth, Irish members to vote together on all Imperial and Home Rule questions, adopt an aggressive policy, and energetically resist coercive legislation; fifth, advocacy of all struggling nationalists in the British Empire and elsewhere."

Parnell never answered this message. Before the year was out Devoy had a letter published in the *Freeman's Journal* explaining his ideas, and had started for Europe. Davitt had already sailed home, and the two men were in Ireland in January, 1879. Meanwhile Parnell was forging ahead.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE SADDLE.

PARNELL was now the leading politician in Ireland. Butt lingered on in the official position, but the young squire's name was on every lip. There could be no question about it—the hopes of the vast mass of the people were set upon him. His Parliamentary activities in 1878 were not as frequently aggressive as in the preceding year, but he made it a point to attend the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, of which he had been elected President in succession to Butt. In this capacity a report came before him which led to a significant and characteristic incident. It was stated in the document that the Catholic priests of England gave trouble by trying to make the Irish vote for the Tories, who conformed to their wishes more than the Liberals on educational questions. When the paragraph was read, Parnell struck it out. There was some murmuring against his action, but he chaffed the objectors, and dismissed the matter with the observation—"I'm not going to fight the Church."

The breach with Butt was widening every day. The old lion himself was near his end. Parnell put neither cap nor cloak on his position and intentions. Professor Galbraith

remonstrated : " You are in rebellion," he said. " Yes," said Parnell, " but in justifiable rebellion." " I am young and active," he said to Butt, with an almost brutal candour, which showed that he could be as callous as any of the hated Saxons, " and I cannot be kicking my heels about the English House of Commons doing nothing. Englishmen will not give me an opportunity of concerning myself about the affairs of my own country, and I mean to concern myself about the affairs of their country." He had the insuppressible egotism of the born leader of men. He summed up the situation in the declaration : " Butt is hopeless. He is too much under the English influence. But you may be sure that when we are pleasing the English we are not winning." He struck the same note addressing the Confederation of Great Britain, which that year held its annual meeting in Dublin : " I said when I was last on this platform I would not promise anything by Parliamentary action, nor any particular line of policy, but I said we could help you to punish the English, and I predicted that the English would very soon get tired of the policy of punishment." Nothing could surpass the virile confidence and the aggressive acrimony of his speeches at this period.

Curiously enough, he was still without a platform to his liking in Ireland. When he was approached on the subject of more frequent speeches at that side of the Channel, he complained that he had not " an independent platform." One was found for him in Tralee, and there he made what was practically his first speech on the agrarian problem. Nothing short of a revolution, he said, would change the land laws. They wanted a tribunal to fix fair rents, and they wanted a peasant proprietary. It might need an earthquake, but if so, " we must have an earthquake."

Parnell and Butt met for the last time at a meeting in the Leinster Lecture Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin, on February 5, 1879. Butt's bugbear, obstruction, was once more discussed. There was the usual trifling with resolutions and amendments, by which public meetings delude themselves when personal considerations perplex great public issues. Parnell had few qualms of conscience where politics were concerned, but there were others who could not forget Butt's services to Ireland. Technically Butt won, but there are moments when votes decide nothing, however big the majorities they register, and this was one of them. It was a conflict of personalities ; it was a conflict of temperaments ; it was a conflict of vital doctrines ; it was almost a conflict of principles ; it was what was, perhaps, even more irreconcilable— a conflict of youth and age.

In April, 1878, Butt had published a manifesto to his constituents at Limerick, in which he again condemned the policy of obstruction, and, pleading ill-health, announced his resignation, but he was prevailed upon to continue his work. He now appeared on the platform to defend his action and methods. When he entered the room his reception is said to have been chilly and formal. Estrangement was in the air. "Won't you speak to me?" he asked of one who had been by his side in many a fray. He mounted the platform, and in the words of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who was present, "his old persuasive eloquence was still as fresh as ever, and he defended his whole policy with a vigour, a plausibility, a closeness of reasoning that were worthy of his best days." He made his forensic as well as his political exit almost at the same moment. He was at this time appearing in the celebrated will case of *Bagot versus Bagot*.

He had been peering wistfully into the future for many months past, and noting with a pathetic attention to detail the ebbing of his life. At times he lost the train of his thought; awakening from a doze, he found it hard to account for his surroundings; he noticed how he dropped words from his sentences and syllables from his words; even the familiar face of his watch puzzled him. "It is the hour of the curfew," he wrote, "telling us the hour is come when the fire must be put out and the light quenched." The day after he spoke at the meeting in Molesworth Street he became seriously ill. He lingered for three months. Towards the end his mind wandered; politics ran through his last ravings. He died on May 5, 1879, at Roebuck Cottage, Clonskeagh, and was buried away in his native Donegal, in a quiet county churchyard, at a spot which he had himself chosen for his last long sleep. He had attained his sixty-sixth year. If Butt must be vindicated it is the duty of his biographer. Here all that need be said is that the integrity of his patriotism has never been doubted, because it was as obvious as the noon-day sun. None dare question his right to a noble space in the pantheon of the Irish race.

At thirty-three years of age Charles Stewart Parnell was now the unquestioned leader of the Irish Nationalists. The death of Butt removed the only bar to the complete acknowledgment of his supremacy. He was not yet Chairman of the Irish members of Parliament, but he probably set no value on that position as matters now stood. He saw plainly that the party would have to be recast and refashioned, and in any case, as he led the people he would inevitably lead the party also.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE IRISH LEADERSHIP.

PARNELL continued to lead the Irish people for eleven years, amongst the most eventful in their troubled history. He died on October 6, 1891. The twenty-six years since then have passed with amazing rapidity. They have been crowded years, full of exciting events and great historic happenings, and for that very reason, perhaps, we have had no time in them to notice the slipping by of the time. It seems but yesterday. I seem almost still to hear the newsboys calling out the fatal news at mid-day in the streets, to feel as if it were only the other day the amazement and the poignancy which the tidings carried to all hearts. Few great men have made such a tragic exit. Few careers have ended amid such a storm. Few leaders have been stricken down amid such a cataclysm. Few men have fought to the very last with such desperation and in such disaster. We can now view the events with calmness. It is possible to gaze on the whole drama with a philosophical eye. But so great was the man and so tremendous the episodes he created, that one still feels something of the old strife trying to hustle the pen as it begins to set down some thoughts about Parnell.

It might be argued that Parnell was a great political plagiarist. It has been asserted that he created little or nothing. Neither did Bonaparte. He gave the French nothing but victory. But that was all the nation asked or wanted. Comparisons are said to be odious, but that is not to say the worst of them; they are very liable to be utterly deceptive. To assign Parnell's place amongst the leaders of Ireland is no easy matter; for, while most of them had nearly precisely the same end in view, so shifting has been the history of the country that they, each and all of them, worked under almost totally dissimilar circumstances. Even when we take the constitutional leaders of Ireland, this difficulty is presented to him who would measure them one with another. If we travel outside the limits of constitutional agitation and leadership, it is extremely hard to institute any comparisons at all. As a personality, Wolfe Tone seems to me to be the supreme figure in Irish history. Whether we judge him by the patriotic purity of his motives, his absolute singleness of purpose, his methodical penetration of possibilities, the meticulous industry he brought to his cause, the

thoroughness of his energy and determination, the prudent boldness of his plans, his unwavering and illimitable courage, the magnitude of his schemes, or the extensive stage on which he performed, and when we reflect how near he went to success, in spite of a formidable conjunction of accidents, the greatness of his life and work and character is obvious. Nor does there appear to be anyone who can be considered to have rivalled him in spaciousness of conception and massiveness of executive ability. He was one of the greatest conspirators in the history of the world, and under the circumstances of the two cases, more masterly in that species of hazardous activity even than William the Silent himself. Had Wolfe Tone been working for the freedom of anything but an island, and that against the very mistress of the seas herself, his success would in all probability have been as complete as that of the great Dutch rebel.

But, as I have said, it would be unreasonable to institute comparisons between Tone and Parnell. The breaking down of alien rule in Ireland was the aim of each, but there the likeness ends. The only other Irish leader who offers the chance of contrast is O'Connell, and antithesis never went further than from him to Parnell. In all that goes to make the accomplished statesman O'Connell had the advantage. His education was more liberal, and his mind was more comprehensive; his reading was wide and deep, and his memory was singularly retentive; his nature was effusive, his heart intensely affectionate, his personality imperative, yet winsome; his courage was proved at the end of the pistol, his oratory was powerful, his mastery of popular emotions perfect, his command of the feelings and passions of the crowd uncanny in its completeness. In the subtler arts of speech he possessed the rarest skill. In a generation of fine speakers none spoke better than he, whether his audience was at Westminster, in the Four Courts, within Conciliation Hall, or on the hillside. He had an expert's knowledge of the history of his country, and had fathomed all the intricacies of her constitutional predicament. He revelled in public affairs. His mind was as pliant and resourceful as his speech. In definite political achievements he stands first. 1829 spells an epoch in the history of man. It penetrated the historical calculations of a Ranke, and influences till this moment the destinies of a vast number of the human race. It has become a fashion with some Irish "intellectuals" to censure and sneer at the Liberator, but that title, to which he has an unassailable right, and by which alone his achievement can be adequately indicated, is sufficient answer to those who

belittle him, forgetful of the fact that he it was who opened the gates of opportunity to themselves and their class. His agitation for Repeal was as dismal a failure as that for Emancipation had been a splendid success; but the fractious impatience of young Ireland, and an awful dispensation of Providence, removed from the shoulders of O'Connell the greater part, if not indeed all, of the responsibility for the political catastrophe in which he hastened to the grave. He dispelled the nightmare which followed the rebellion. He raised his race from the valley of crouching despair and fevered obeisance to the very hill-tops of confidence and courage. He recalled manliness to its island home, and gave it thereafter perpetuity of tenure. His work was entirely wholesome in that it straightened, strengthened and steeled the spirit of the Irish. Not only was he the Liberator, but the saviour of the Irish race.

Let it be remembered that such comparison as we have been considering is nearly always unfair, and quite beside the point, if for no other reason than that the statesmen of each generation have all the advantage of the successes and the failures of those whom they succeed. Politics is, indeed, a progressive science. As well compare Thomson with Newton as Asquith with William Pitt. Thomson had all the benefit of the legacy left by Newton; and Asquith knows how Pitt worked through a great European war. The Ireland in which Parnell appeared was as different politically from the Ireland in which O'Connell began his labours as the England of to-day is from the England of Walpole's rotten boroughs. It was the enfranchisement which O'Connell won for his countrymen that enabled Parnell to begin at all. Besides, and it is an element which Irish historians are apt to forget, there had meantime been a vast political and social evolution in England. The England with which Parnell had to contend was not by any means the England which O'Connell fought. Its democracy had had to wrestle with privilege and prerogative, and had battled with them to the edge of civil war in order to win even a partial measure of political power. The masses of the English people had felt the pressure of coercion, and had loosened it after much toil and sweat and pain. Upon the ears of such an audience the pleadings of liberty fell with a grateful sound. Parnell could hope to strike a responsive cord in the hearts of men who themselves had felt oppression, had struggled to cast it off, and had won some release from thralldom. O'Connell had to face the impregnable bigotry of the Tory caste and the stoney political science of antediluvian Whigs, as aristocratic as the

Tories themselves. It was more than half a century before a Labour member had ever aspired to Parliamentary honours, and more than seventy-six years before any daring spirit had even dreamed of a Labour Party. A nation without votes was the only constitutional weapon the Liberator had with which to assail the conquerors of Napoleon and the masters of two continents.

CHAPTER XIX.

EIGHTEEN SEVENTY-NINE.

THE year 1879 saw the birth of the Land League. That event coloured and influenced the whole political and social future of the Gaelic race, produced one of the great agrarian revolutions in history, and may be said to have settled the destiny of Ireland for many a generation to come. Like so many other portents, it came upon men in stealthy fashion. It had almost grown to huge stature before it was perceived. But, before we narrate its beginnings, the political debris of the year had better be cleared away.

The Government of the day tried to deal with the problem of Parliamentary obstruction, but progress was slow, and Parnell thwarted their efforts by winning a notable victory on the Army Discipline Bill. With characteristic sagacity, he concentrated his attention on a subject upon which he was certain to have effective English support—that of flogging in the army. He had made the subject his own, attacking it in 1877 and 1878, and now again in 1879. This time he was backed by a considerable body of Radicals, and the Government only mustered majorities of fifty-six and fifty-three against him. He carried the fight from May into June, when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, John Bright, and Sir William Harcourt, who had executed a particularly neat *volte face* for so portly a politician, threw in their lot with the Irish leader. The Government gave some concession, they reduced the number of lashes that could be inflicted, but Parnell would have the whole hog or nothing. He even supported Mr. Phil Callan's dramatic suggestion that a "cat" should be exhibited in the Library of the House. Sir William Harcourt again performed an elephantine somersault, landing on his feet in support of the Government once more. But Chamberlain fired up. "Nothing can be done without obstruction" was his conclusion, and it must have made Parnell delighted with himself and his strategy. "I will only

add before I sit down," continued the still redoubtable Radical, "that the friends of humanity and the friends of the British Army owe a debt of gratitude to my honourable friend, the member for Meath, for standing up alone against the system of flogging, when I myself and other members had not the courage of our convictions. The honourable member had opposed flogging in the Mutiny Bill, but unsuccessfully; he had opposed it unsuccessfully in the Prisons Bill, but now he raises the question again, and I hope his efforts will be crowned with success." To Mr. Justin McCarthy Chamberlain remarked that Parnell's obstructive tactics were the only tactics to succeed.

Amendment followed amendment with growing Government majorities, and all along Parnell recurred to the idea of an exhibition of the "cat." He had a notion that the House knew nothing about the scarifying instrument which they were enshrining in their legislation. But, apart from this, the dramatic always appealed to Parnell. There was nothing more rousing, nothing which so tickled the fancy of a crowd when he rose to address them than his habit of taking off his coat with the impetuous vigour of a man about to tackle a pugilist. At an earlier period of his obstruction campaign he conceived the extraordinary project of entering the Chamber dressed in a fantastic costume, so as to provoke Mr. Speaker and attract the attention of the press and the public. He was now bent on having the "cat" exhibited before the House. He had his way. On July 5 "cats" were forthcoming and as Parnell had shrewdly surmised the sight of them was too much for the House. "Abolish flogging," shouted Chamberlain, "and your Bill will be passed at once; otherwise, it will be systematically opposed and obstructed." The conflict raged on till the middle of July. Again the Government bent a little. They announced that they would abolish flogging in all cases except when death was the alternative. Parnell would not have it. Chamberlain and Hartington quarrelled in the sight of the whole House. Bright took his stand by Parnell. But the Government would not yield another inch. Their majorities rose. The long and bitter fight ended. Parnell had, indeed, come from it with flying colours. He had attracted a great concession, and flogging was doomed. It was abolished two years later. His name will be for ever associated with a reform in which the dignity of manhood was involved. And how could such a member so employed and so powerfully supported by such irreproachable Englishmen be considered an obstructionist?

This great Parliamentary battle was finished in time to release the new leader for his first election test. Two candidates were on the hustings in Ennis, Mr. William O'Brien, who afterwards adorned the judicial bench with a certain saturnine grace and with splendid eloquence, and Mr. Lysaght Finigan, who had Parnell's support. He repaired to Ennis with such stalworths as Mr. T. D. Sullivan, and delivered a speech, which is a perfect model of what a speech on the hustings should be. It is a brief speech, as most of Parnell's were; later on he, indeed, brought the art of short speeches to a degree of very great perfection. The sentences are sharp and short; the appeal is straight, business-like, direct; the criticism is stinging and convincing; and the whole performance swift and full of fire, and not without a certain rugged, grave, and spontaneous eloquence, showing what an excellent public speaker he had become in a few years. The ecclesiastics and the leading organ of Nationalism in the press were on the side of O'Brien, whom Parnell described as "only known to us in Irish political life for bad actions and bad deeds," but the Nationalist won. It is a curious circumstance that it fell to the lot of O'Brien a quarter of a century later to take the side of the Parnellites against the priests when he delivered judgment in the celebrated election petition in Meath, the very county which Parnell represented when the Ennis contest was fought and won. Mr. Barry O'Brien tells us Parnell said: "If Ennis had been lost I would have retired from public life, for it would have satisfied me that the priests were supreme in Irish politics." Mr. O'Brien is one of the best informed and most reliable Irish historians, but this timorous decision is very unlike the manner of young Parnell.

About the same time he was accused of having used, at a meeting of Irish members on July 28, the opprobrious phrase, "Papist rats." The accusation got into print, and that is enough to win a measure of credence for almost any rumour. The incident arose out of a discussion on the Irish (Royal) University Bill, upon which some of the Catholic members, including the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, favoured a compromise, while Parnell was for standing out "for the extreme Catholic demand." The moderates gained the day, and it was then, when passing from the debating room, that Parnell was alleged to have stigmatised the supporters of compromise as "Papist rats." Much worse has been said again and again, and justifiably too, of backboneless Irish Catholics. Some of the most despicable traitors have emerged from the Catholic ranks. But what a Catholic could

say with even a measure of approval might not unreasonably be regarded as a rank insult coming from a Protestant's lips. Apart from all other considerations, Parnell was, even in his hottest days, too business-like to commit such a palpable mistake. There was a warm interchange about it, and the accusers, possibly in good faith, stuck firmly to their assertion. The incident, together with another, was suddenly flashed upon the public by the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*, who retailed the gossip of the Parliamentary Lobby, and disclosed the contents of some private letters, in which Parnell was accused of having referred to some of his colleagues in the most disparaging manner at the Limerick Junction on his way back from the election at Ennis. The charge as to the Junction seems laughable to-day, but it created a regular rumpus. Parnell was alleged to have said that Mr. Shaw, who was now Chairman of the Irish members, was an old woman, and not fit to lead any party; that another of the members had handed himself over to the Whigs, body and soul; that another was a wooden-headed martinet; that another was a very good dancer, but politically useless; and that Mr. Gray, proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, should be kicked out of Tipperary, and would be at the next election. A lively correspondence ensued, and overwhelming evidence was forthcoming in Parnell's defence. It would seem to us a ridiculous thing to raise a row about, all the more so as the tart *dicta* complained of probably approximate quite closely to the verdict of history. As to the more serious allegation, Justin McCarthy, Bigger, Frank Hugh O'Donnell, Lysaght Finigan and A. M. Sullivan supported Parnell's denial; while Charles Meldon, G. Errington and Denis M. O'Connor more or less substantiated Dwyer Gray's report of the opprobrious phrase. But the accuser and his witnesses differed as to terms, and the various accounts when compared show that there were important dissimilarities in the phrase as it reached different ears. The fact seems to be that the allegation made, possibly enough in good faith, was absolutely untrue. The words were used, but, according to Mr. Barry O'Brien, by "an extreme Catholic, when there was a good deal of confusion in the room." Parnell's own denial was both explicit and argumentative. Why, he asked, should he offend Irish Catholics by speaking of them insultingly. It would be foolish, especially for an Irish Protestant politician. "No," he said, "I would not insult the priests." He never did. Even in days when the Irish clergy were in arms against him, no word of insult towards them escaped his lips. As in

the other case, it is not unlikely that many of his Catholic countrymen would to-day endorse the description, and, in point of fact, while the controversy was still hot, Canon Doyle, of Ramsgrange, wrote a long letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, and, pointing out that a General Election was close at hand, with evidently wilful deliberation remarked that the people would then have the power to hurl out "the rats," emphasising with inverted commas the significance of the allusion. At length Archbishop Croke, of Cashel, intervened, and Parnell and Gray agreed to make it up and be good boys in future. The *Freeman's Journal* had a difficult card to play, a most perplexing situation to diagnose, and that it was somewhat undecided as to which way the cat would jump need not cause any surprise. From Parnell's point of view, it was unquestionably unsatisfactory, but no Irish newspaper had ever before been confronted with such a distracting and embarrassing position.

Early in the year Devoy and Davitt had two conversations with Parnell. Parnell would enter into no compact with the Clan-na-Gael. The two Republicans then approached the Fenians of the home countries. A meeting of the Council was held in Paris. Charles Kickham induced that body to show them the door. Kickham was such a typical specimen of the Irish irreconcilable that, even at the expense of interrupting the narrative, I may be pardoned for dwelling upon his personality for a moment.

He had many most lovable characteristics. He was a typical, genial Tipperary man. His disposition is described as childlike; a bright-souled, warm-hearted, affectionate being; simple, innocent, unaffected; and with a glowing intelligence and an infectious sense of humour. All this was steeped in tragedy. An accident shattered his frame, deafened, and almost blinded him. Marred and hampered, he had to grope through life weighed with the most pathetic disabilities than can inflict a human being. As has been said of other afflicted writers, his misfortune was the benefit of others, and remains our advantage to this day. Kickham was intended for medicine, but he was no longer capable of that profession, and turned to literature. His catastrophe had left his mind unsoured and his spirit untouched. He has been very aptly compared with Michael Davitt, who also conquered a terrible physical deprivation. "With redoubted energy and pluck he set about overcoming his defect and conquering his deficiency, and he did so by his indomitable will and pluck."

Kickham was twenty in 1848. Twenty in Ireland is heroic, even when deaf and blind, and it dreams great thoughts for Mother Erin. But if it were ever inclined to be drowsy, craven and base, it was little likely to succumb to the temptation while the pens of Davis, Duffy, Mangan, O'Hagan and Mitchel were busy in the land. The fire of '48 found highly inflammable material in the lad from Mullinahone, whose uncle was John O'Mahony, of Fenian fame. He devoured national literature, feasted on the prose and poems of the *Nation*, and became one of the moving spirits of the local Confederate Club. 'Forty-eight failed, as failure is understood in the language of the law courts and the stock exchange, and the seething intellect and ardent spirit of young Kickham found consolation in the Tenant Right movement of '52. Then came the treachery of the renegade Judge Keogh, and '52 was indeed a failure, even in the language of the patriots and the poets. Meanwhile Kickham had been doing some journalistic work. Like so many young Irishmen with ready pens, his first accents were in verse. Poems and peasant sketches—that was his first programme, as it has been of countless budding writers in Ireland time out of mind.

His next great venture was in 1863, when his uncle, O'Mahony, came from America. Kickham then became a Fenian. It is not hard to conceive his feelings about constitutional agitation after the Tenant Right fiasco. The thing stank in the nostrils of honourable men. There seemed nothing for them, if they were to remain honest and honourable, but dangerous enterprises. Fenianism courted publicity; it conspired *currente calamo*; it went the right way about getting into the dock before its time. Amongst the other astonishing things it did was to publish a newspaper with three editors, one of whom was Charles Kickham, and in connection with which one of the choicest informers of modern times, Pierce Nagle, found employment. In other words, John O'Leary, Kickham and Luby, the editors, represented the Fenian organisation in the office of the *Irish People*, and Nagle represented Dublin Castle. Nagle was the most efficient of all.

The office was raided. By a series of uncanny accidents most vital and incriminatory documents flopped into the hands of the authorities, and judges and juries were kept busy for weeks convicting and sentencing prisoners because of a criminal negligence which was as bad for them as treason-felony. Everything is all for the best in this best of all possible worlds. There is no knowing the bloodshed, misery

and injustice that would probably have followed had the movement come to a head. The result would have been the same, as far as the stability of Dublin Castle was concerned. Kickham was tried by the master villain, Judge Keogh, and Judge Fitzgerald, and he refused the assistance of counsel in his defence. "I consider this trial a mockery," he said. He addressed the jury, quoting Davis :

" God of Justice, I sighed, send Thy Spirit down
On these lords so cruel and proud,
To soften their hearts and relax their frown.
Or else, I cried aloud,
Vouchsafe Thy strength to the peasant's hand
To drive them for ever from out the land."

He was found guilty. He said : " I have endeavoured to serve Ireland, and now I am prepared to suffer for Ireland," and Keogh performed the congenial task of sentencing him to fourteen years' penal servitude. That renegade professed to feel pain in pronouncing sentence on a man who had displayed such intellectual attainments. It may have been so. Even the most robust traitor must have moments of remorse and apprehension. Keogh could not have imagined what was actually ahead of him. In the passage from the court to the cell Kickham picked up a bit of paper. It was a little picture of the Blessed Virgin. He touched it reverently with his lips, and asked permission to keep it. He was transported to Pentonville, " where his treatment was barbarous." Kickham's health gave out.

" They chain the noble-minded, pure and true ;
They place the minstrel in the murderer's cell,
Whose frame and soul that once in glory grew,
Must feel the torture of a second hell.
The bard who sang of Irish truth and love,
And feasted on his country's golden page,
Now bends before a brutal jailer's rage,
Because the ancient right of war he dared to wage."

John Francis Maguire managed to enlist the attention of Parliament. Kickham was liberated after three years' torture. His life was practically ended.

He went to live at Blackrock, near Dublin, and there, while walking in the garden, on August 21st, 1882, he was seized with a paralytic stroke, and died next day. His last words were : " Let it be known that I die in the Catholic Faith, and that I die loving Ireland, and I only wish I could have

done more for her." He was buried with his forefathers in Tipperary. John O'Leary silhouetted him with quaint and characteristic emphasis, *Vir, splendissimus vir*. The pediment of his statue in Tipperary says all that is necessary by way of epitaph: "Charles J. Kickham, Poet, Novelist, and, above all, Patriot." He loved children. They were playing about his feet when the fatal stroke struck him down. They were wont to talk to him on their fingers, for he could not hear the delicious prattle of their voices.

Kickham's fame is safe and sound. "Knocknagow" and "Sally Kavanagh" have probably not even yet attained their due meed of popularity. One is compelled to call "Knocknagow" his masterpiece, in deference to public opinion. A great patch of the Ireland of Kickham's youth lives in it for ever. Whatever transformations may come over Ireland, however customs may die or grow, no matter when or why ideas may change, and the life of the country hark back or step forward, Tipperary in the mid-nineteenth century will continue to be vividly familiar to Irishmen from the pages of Kickham's great story. As a story pure and simple, it has been held to rank almost as high as any of Carleton's, Banim's, or Griffin's. Perhaps there are some who would place it on an even higher level. There are people in it whom we rank amongst our closest and most delightful acquaintances and whom we never dream of regarding as creatures of the brain. One of his biographers calls it an immortal work, and, defiant as is the phrase, the judicious critic will not lightly challenge it. But it is open to some question whether the sublime pathos of "Sally Kavanagh" does not place it on a higher plane of art, and ensure for it a nobler place in the history of fiction. His novels have eclipsed his poems. No complete collection of them has as yet appeared, but every Irish boy knows, or ought to know, "Rory of the Hills" and "Patrick Sheehan," "Soggarth Aroon" and "The Irish Peasant Girl." The last poem sufficiently attests how fine a poet he might have been if only patriotic poets could keep out of politics, which is obviously impossible.

This was the man who anathematised the new departure of Devoy and Davitt. Just one small concession was accorded; that the officers of the Fenian organisation would be allowed to participate if they wished in "the open movement," but would be held responsible for words or acts considered hurtful to "the revolutionary cause." Parnell also conversed with Kickham. It is, however, uncertain at what time. He asked the untamable Republican whether he thought the people felt very keenly on the land question.

When the question had filtered through Kickham's ear trumpet, the poet blazed out: "Feel keenly on the land question?" was the reply; "I am sorry to say that I think they would go to hell for it." Devoy returned to America to work might and main for "the new departure."

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAND LEAGUE.

MEANWHILE Connaught had given birth to the Land League. Cromwell's curse had come home to roost. No big event had ever been delivered with less fuss and notice. The Irish newspapers of the period, even the most Nationalist of them, are amusing reading. Their columns were filled with anxieties about Afghanistan and Zululand; they were in flowery mood about the centenary of the poet Moore, and in the most irritable humour with the rash of electoral squabbles which broke out in Ireland like an epidemic. But you will search their pages in vain for a report of the speeches and proceedings at the historic meeting from which the re-birth of Ireland dates. The only record I can find is this insignificant, unilluminating paragraph in the *Freeman's Journal* of the following day:—"Reduction of rent.—A Press Association telegram reports that a great public demonstration took place at Irishtown, near Claremorris, County Mayo, yesterday. Its object was the protection of the small tenant-farmers and the procuring of an abatement of rents proportionate to the reduction which has taken place in the value of produce and stock. Resolutions were passed in favour of low rents and fixity of tenure. The meeting was very orderly." A passing reference, at a meeting in Dublin next day, by Mr. John Ferguson, of Glasgow, who had travelled to the demonstration in Mayo, and another reference in a letter from Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., to a subsequent land meeting, were all the hints of the famous occasion that crept into the newspapers until long afterwards. It is well for the prestige of journalism that its products are inevitably transient.

Before the Land League the interests of tenant-farmers were looked after in a happy-go-lucky fashion by disconnected local associations with purely parochial programmes and concerns. In Galway, however, Mr. Matt Harris inspired and maintained a really vigorous society—the Tenants'

Defence Association of Ballinasloe. There is no use examining now how much his wholesome example smoothed the path of Michael Davitt further north in the province.

It was in Mayo the new movement began. A meeting, convened by Davitt and Joseph Brennan, assembled on Sunday, August 20, 1879, at Irishtown, a small out-of-the-way place, scarcely worthy of notice on the map, but in the midst of territory where the full rigours of Irish landlordism had been endured by successive generations of the peasants. Agrarian serfdom was their only birthright. Davitt himself was not present at the meeting. Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., was the only prominent man who took part in the proceedings. The Irish peasant has often been maligned as priest-ridden. Let it never be forgotten that the meeting which began the Land League movement was organised to denounce landlordism in general no doubt, but also to secure reductions of rent for the tenants of a local Catholic priest. In that special purpose it was successful. What differentiated the gathering at Irishtown from the many other agrarian meetings held in different parts of the country was that the people and their spokesmen resolved to follow it up, and to impart a continuity to their movement which had never resulted from such efforts elsewhere. Accordingly, no sooner was the first meeting over and past than arrangements were pushed on for another and a more elaborate demonstration in a more important part of the county.

Westport, the chief town of Mayo, was the place selected. Davitt was evidently determined to hook in Parnell, and he was accordingly invited and persuaded to attend. Sunday, June 8, was the day arranged. From it dates Parnell's complete identification with the land agitation, and from it came one of the phrases that coloured the agitation, fixed men's minds upon its ends and methods, and became a watchword throughout the length and breadth of the land. Danger came from an unexpected quarter. Just before the meeting, John of Tuam, the Venerable Archbishop of the Diocese, issued a letter of warning, and, according to Mr. Barry O'Brien, indirectly warned Parnell not to attend. The meeting, wrote the Archbishop, had been "convened in a mysterious and disorderly manner," and he went on to say that "unhallowed combination leads inevitably to disaster and to the firmer riveting of the chain by which we are unhappily bound as a subordinate people to a dominant race."

Parnell, however, travelled from London for the meeting. It poured rain, yet crowds came from long distances, and the first great demonstration of the new movement, although

threatened and surrounded with such militating circumstances, was a success. It is interesting to note that Davitt took charge of the political resolution, leaving to Parnell the agrarian. Davitt's speech was the first public synopsis of "the new departure" delivered to the people. There was to be land reform and self-government; but what was self-government? Davitt refused to define it. He would leave it to each Irishman to draw his own inference. They all knew his opinions. Then he wound up by advising them not to allow anybody, "no matter (he now spoke of the clergy with respect) what the cut or colour of his cloth might be, to use the present agitation or to use them in order that their personal grievances might be remedied. At present the question of the day was the land question." Upon that last bit of advice the *Freeman's Journal* gave Davitt a piece of its mind. Few Irish meetings are without humorous interludes, and this historic occasion was no exception. A Mr. Thomas Joyce got hold of the platform and held it while, according to the sly reporter, he "examined the condition of the tenure on which Adam held Paradise, and, tracing the land question under Numa Pompilius, showed that the present system owed its origin to William the Conqueror."

The Chairman next introduced Parnell as "the great Grattan of the age," and Parnell, with his usual astuteness, began by setting himself, as far as was possible, right with Archbishop MacHale; "the man," he exclaimed, "who has stood between the Irish people and the exterminator"—no man could speak of him without the highest respect. But he was sure John of Tuam would not expect him to dishonour himself by breaking his word to that meeting by remaining away. It was very hard then and for a long time after to put Parnell in the wrong. He knew to a nicety how nasty situations could even be turned to his own personal advantage and to the advantage of his immediate objects. Without hesitation, he declared land purchase to be the only possible final solution of the Irish agrarian problem; but meanwhile, if the tenant paid a fair rent, he should enjoy the fruits of his industry. "Now, what must we do in order to induce the landlords to see the position?" he asked; and he answered in the memorable and now hackneyed phrase—"You must show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip on your homesteads and lands. You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as you were dispossessed in 1847." That was the whole movement in a nutshell. It was amplified and expounded in a thousand variants, but in these few sentences Parnell mapped out the course the peasantry of Ireland were

to follow, and did follow, during a whole generation. "I should be deceiving you," he added significantly, "if I told you that there was any use relying upon the exertions of the Irish members of Parliament on your behalf," but "God helps him who helps himself." The peroration was startlingly brief, and in a manner that he very often affected. "You have a great country to struggle for, a great country before you. It is worth a little exertion on your part; it is worth a little time. Do your best, and your country will thank you for it and your children hereafter."

He also gave in the course of his speech a slight inkling of the policy he had in his mind as to his future Parliamentary action. "While we are getting a concession," he said, "we may show the Government a little consideration for the time being, and give them a *quid pro quo*, but after that the bargain ceases; and when we have returned them a fair return for what we have got, we are quits again, and are free to use such measures as are necessary, according to the times and according to the circumstances."

That, in short, was the famous meeting in Westport, when Parnell took the second great political plunge of his life. Peasant proprietorship was to be his final aim. Davitt, however, never wavered in his faith in Land Nationalisation. He had already conceived that idea while in prison, and it was, perhaps, a reason why, during his first visit to America in 1878, he sought out the celebrated Henry George, and began a friendship which lasted many years.

From Westport Davitt carried the torch to Claremorris, just a month later. Again the venerable Archbishop intervened. He was one of the most eloquent of men, a master of scathing phrase, and of persuasive admonition. He had given great services to Ireland. He was fearless in defence of the people when courage was sorely needed. And now the snows of ninety winters had settled on his saintly head. To hear denunciation from such a great and indomitable patriot cut poor Davitt to the very quick. "In some parts of the country," wrote Dr. MacHale, "the people in calmer moments will not fail to be astonished at the circumstance of finding themselves at the tail of a few unknown, strolling men, who, with affected grief, deploring the condition of the tenantry, seek only to mount to place and preferment on the shoulders of the people, and should they succeed in their ambitious designs, they would not hesitate to shake aside at once the instruments of their advancement as an unprofitable incumbrance." Mr. T. P. O'Connor expresses the belief

that the pen that wrote that letter was probably not Dr. MacHale's.

However that may be, Davitt took these censures as applying to himself, though, indeed, it is not impossible he was less in the Archbishop's mind than Parnell. At any rate, he issued a brief reply, at once dignified and unexceptional, putting aside the taunts, which he repelled in a manly way, without undue heat or bitterness, and only complaining that they should have come from "the patriarch of his race." No one then or since ever imagined that the great Archbishop's concern was other than the safety of his flock; and who could blame him, with seventy years of Irish history behind him, for looking with apprehension at the novel and startling enterprise. The most moderate of the new agitators cried aloud for land purchase, while the most perfervid shouted the cataclysmic word Natinalisation, and that in a country where an occasional abatement of the rack-rent and the pardon of a hanging gale were looked upon as blessings straight from heaven, and where the landlord who did not evict wholesale when the whim seized him was regarded as one of nature's gentlemen. Besides, Dr. MacHale was past the age for even simple experiments in social and economic reform. The man of ninety, however fiery and venturesome has been his youth, has learned the philosophy of bearing present ills for fear of "others that we know not of."

At the meeting in Claremorris on July 13, 1879, John Dillon began his remarkable and arduous career as a land agitator. After Davitt himself, no one played a bolder or more self-sacrificing part in the long and bitter struggle that ensued. At Claremorris his speech was conspicuous for its eulogy of Parnell, and the warmth of its appeal to the peasantry to support the young leader. A month later Ballyhaunis was roused, and so on through the county until Davitt considered that the moment had arrived for tying up all the divisions of Mayo—its baronies, townlands, and parishes—into a single organisation. So far the fateful term "Land League" had been unheard in Ireland. The last of the preliminary meetings was held in the square of Claremorris on Lady Day in harvest.

Next day, August 16, a memorable day in the history of Western Europe, the first Convention of tenant-farmers held in Ireland assembled in Daly's Hotel, Castlebar. The Convention was made possible by the recent repeal of the Convention Act—one of those iniquitous statutes which hindered constitutional agitation in Ireland, and helped to drive the people into secret and illegal conclaves. Mr. James J.

Loudon, a barrister, of Westport, presided, and around him sat delegates from every part of Mayo. The proceedings were matter-of-fact and most business-like, and gave little or no indication of the conflagration that was being enkindled that Saturday afternoon. The important part of the Convention was the reading by Michael Davitt of the constitution—the aims and objects—of “the National Land League of Mayo,” then formed. It was the first time “Land League” was applied to any Irish organisation. This document, adopted as a manifesto by the Convention, bears the unmistakable impress of Davitt’s hand. It is the best summary of his agrarian views extant, or at least of so much of his mind as he deemed it advisable to set forth in the public official programme of the League. There is no mention of his pet, Nationalisation, but the procedure laid down shows how thoroughly he had thought out his work, how complicated and difficult he knew the problem to be, and how drastic were the measures he was prepared to take to accomplish the amelioration of the toilers of the soil. It is declared that injustices must be exposed, and for that purpose minute information collected from all quarters, and that the names of all persons who shall rent or occupy land from which tenants have been dispossessed for non-payment of exorbitant rents must be published. In fact, as far as the manifesto is concerned, the whole affair has the appearance more of a well co-ordinated and skilfully organised publicity campaign than anything else : but within it one readily detects the germ of the formidable machinery of agrarian revolution into which the League developed.

Davitt’s scheme now took on a wider and more comprehensive aspect. From the very beginning he intended to involve the whole of Ireland in the agitation, and it is perfectly characteristic of his methodical character that he began by applying his tests thoroughly to a single county, and that the county with which he was most closely and tenderly connected. His success in Mayo was fully equal to his expectations. Not only had the peasantry crowded to his standard, but they had done so in spite of very powerful influences. It was now plain that the galling serfdom which landlordism had imposed on some of the most helpless of all the Irish peasantry had not extinguished their spirit and manhood. If Mayo were so tractable and courageous, the highest hopes might lawfully be nursed with regard to more favourably situated counties. Besides, he had succeeded in committing Parnell to his platform and to a good deal of his programme, and the new leader very evidently recognised the

importance of the land question. He now boldly suggested that all Ireland should be linked up in a Land League. Parnell never rushed at problems with his head down. He saw dangers and difficulties ahead, but it was plain that Davitt meant business, and would go on with or without him. At length he agreed to the proposal, and the Irish National Land League was established at a meeting, which he convened, in the Imperial Hotel, Sackville Street, Dublin, on October 21. Mr. Andrew Kettle presided. The organisation destined to become so famous and formidable was christened by a resolution proposed by Father Behan, a devoted and patriotic priest, and the objects of the League were tersely and moderately stated as the reduction of rack-rents and the creation of a peasant proprietary. Parnell was elected president, Messrs. Kettle, Davitt and Brennan honorary secretaries, and Messrs. Bigger, W. H. O'Sullivan and Patrick Egan treasurers; and, on the motion of Father Sheehy, seconded by Davitt, Parnell was requested to visit America to obtain assistance from exiled Irishmen and other sympathisers with the objects of the new League. Lastly, it was resolved that none of the funds of the Land League should be used to purchase any landlord's interest in the land or to further the interests of any Parliamentary candidate. The Executive of the League was a palpable blend of Fenianism and Constitutionalism.

This was the beginning of the Land League. I have thought it right and interesting to describe with some minuteness this portentous event. The young organisation very soon sprang to manhood, and developed a giant's strength. It was served with extraordinary zeal, courage, and self-sacrifice. It was assailed with the most violent abuse and with all the force and penalties the Government could bring against it. It became the centre of a revolutionary frenzy, for which there is no exact parallel. In a few years it worked a wonder that no one in 1878 or even in 1879 itself would have thought possible. "As in one day," says Standish O'Grady, "the Irish land system fell with a crash. In 1880 Ireland was owned by the landlords; in 1881 Ireland was owned by the tenants. The Cabinet yielded before the cabin."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MAELSTROM BEGINS.

IN all history there is not another example of such fiery progress. The movement was an instantaneous success, as far as the organisation of the tenantry was concerned. The fact is that Ireland was fully ripe for the effort. The need was violently urgent; the leaders were desperately earnest. I have spoken of the hostile caution evinced by the aged Archbishop of Tuam. Nothing was more remarkable and significant at the beginning of the Land League than the alacrity with which the Catholic priests made peace with it. Already, as early as the meeting at Claremorris in July, and after the Archbishop had written his sombre warning, the adhesion of the Catholic clergy was made perfectly manifest. Eleven influential priests stood on the platform with Davitt and Dillon, and Canon Ulick Bourke, who presided, took occasion to emphasise the fact that though for the previous six months, "owing to some misunderstanding," the priests had not been on the same platform with the people, "to-day, however, the priests and people of Mayo are as one." Hence, he added, that gathering had claims to be regarded as something above the meetings hitherto held in favour of the tenants' cause. It was no small triumph for Davitt to have attached to his side the irresistible force of the Catholic priesthood in the very infancy of his movement, and that, too, notwithstanding high ecclesiastical opposition.

He had now involved in the cause of the farmers four of the most formidable factors in the Ireland of that day: he had with him the priests, Parnell, the active constitutionalists and the Fenians. Whatever views the latter held on Parliamentary agitation, they were heart and soul with the tenants in their revolt against landlordism.

It is no part of my purpose to dilate upon the land system of Ireland or the greater and lesser grievances of the farmers. Nor is it my intention to describe the land struggle in the middle of the century or the efforts of the legislature to deal with it. Much Parliamentary tinkering had been done upon the problem, but all that belongs to a wider stage of Irish history than that which pertains to this book. The question has created an extensive literature and a huge mass of legislation, but at present we are only concerned with it as it was affected by the work of Parnell and Davitt.

A Land Act had been passed in 1870. It purported to secure for the tenant on eviction compensation for his improvements, and in some cases also for disturbance. Gladstone professed to believe that this Act would be the "final settlement" of the Irish land problem. Final is the most foolish word in the vocabulary of a statesman. The Act made no provision against rack-rent. It did not stay eviction. It failed, as everybody who knew anything at all about the subject knew it must. And now, in 1879, the last state of the Irish farmer was worse than the first. Foreign competition had made an inroad on his prices, and a series of very inclement seasons had shattered his crops. He was fearfully hard hit from every direction. English official opinion made light of his plight. The Chief Secretary, Mr. James Lowther, a man of very moderate ability and intelligence, while admitting the prevalent agricultural depression, declared that it was neither as prevalent nor acute as the depression existing in other parts of the United Kingdom. The Viceroy, the Duke of Marlborough, whose administrative capacity was no better and no worse than the Chief Secretary's, spoke in censure of the atmospheric conditions and admonished the clerk of the weather, as if a ray of sunshine was all the problem required. But in the very speech in which such elephantine pleasantries were scattered, the Duke chanced to mention a fact which attests sufficiently the deplorable state to which a vast body of the tenantry of Ireland had sunk. There were, he pointed out, 100,000 mud cabins in the country; certainly not less than half a million of the people, and probably more, existed in these wretched hovels, and literally dreaded eviction from them. But the Viceroy was little affected by the hideous fact he had stated. The agricultural depression in England, he said, was more severe and comprehensive than in Ireland. His solution, in addition to cajolery of the meteorological divinities, was instruction and prizes for small farmers. Between Dunsink Observatory and the Model Farm at Glasnevin an era of happiness and prosperity was to be evolved for the peasantry of the afflicted island. Of course, the whole evil was rooted in alien rule, in confiscation, and the subjugation of the native race. The movement undertaken by Davitt was actually for the reconquest of Ireland from the conqueror. It was in every sense of the word a national question he tackled, though the details were applicable to one section of the community only. The circumstances were favourable for the raising of the whole great issue. Urgent need compelled a piecemeal solution, the tenantry had to be saved immediately from

famine and wholesale eviction, and, therefore, attention was concentrated on the sheer necessities of the case, but there could be no mistake about the end in view, which was nothing more nor less than Ireland for the Irish.

The potato—"Raleigh's fatal gift"—failed the peasants once more. Evictions were on the increase. The spectre of famine stared Erin in the two eyes. Davitt at his earlier meetings was careful to advise restraint. Outrage he knew well would hurt the people's cause. But his eloquence was strong and stirring. He minced no words about the landlords. He stripped their rapacity naked to the world. He held up a glorious prospect before the eyes of the farmers, all the more effectively as they surveyed their present wretched plight. Feelings began to glow, to simmer, to boil. Ominous cries were raised at many of the meetings. Parnell did not tend to soften emotions by his less perfervid oratory. If anything, his speeches were more calculated to inflame the people than were the burning periods of the Fenian. For, in his own stern, calculating way he rubbed hard and goading facts into their heads, and fixed their minds with inexorable deliberation on the relentless features of their case, their bitter need, their appalling outlook, their past sufferings, their patent grievances, the rank injustice which afflicted them. Worse still, he breathed a confidence into them by the almost audacious faith of his dogmatism. He told them that they had the remedy in their own hands, expatiated on their inherent strength, of which they had seemed unconscious, and, in imperturbable accents which compelled conviction, promised them victory if only they stood manfully together. "Keep a firm grip of your homesteads" became the first article of their creed.

The two men were superb figures for the work. Davitt was fluent and eloquent from his early days. He had a rich, deep voice, resonant and thrilling. He spoke with a fanatic's strength, and he coloured all his words with the glow of a highly emotional nature. His hair was raven black. His eyes had an uncanny sparkle. His ample brow was puckered in a frown that never lifted. Yet over his strikingly luminous face his feelings played constant pranks. He could almost frighten with a glance. His smile was bewitchingly tender. His scorn was inimitable. His pathos was hard, yet homely. He spoke like a great peasant, with a doric grace that fascinated his class, and he appeared before them slashed and furrowed with suffering. Who could resist that tall, young, one-armed man, so evidently sincere, who was marred by the marks of chains and fetters borne for his country's sake! He

looked much older than his years, and all his hearers knew that prison had aged him prematurely. Yet the exaltation of his cause lifted him out of his weakness, and as he faced the peasantry of Mayo he exhaled a fire and vehemence which made them absolutely obedient to his sway.

Parnell has been described at this period as bearing all the marks of imperious leadership upon him. He was a tall, wiry, willowy, handsome man. He was smart and spruce, gay and triumphant. He walked with a light, springy step, held himself straight as an arrow, and his every movement was graceful and energetic. He spoke softly, and with an English accent, but he could send his voice far, and under the influence of strong feeling, make it incisive and penetrating. He usually spoke slowly, as if measuring and weighing his words, but a gust of passion sometimes swept words from him with a swiftness and force which carried audiences off their feet. He had by this time become quite fluent and steady on the platform, but he had the art of compression, and in a brief space covered a great expanse of thought. His sentences were short and crisp, and could be remembered easily. He rarely essayed rhetoric, but there are many eloquent passages in the speeches which he made at the beginning of the Land League. His illustrations were always excellent and apt, and often not without a spice of rich humour. But it was his personality, that almost indefinable thing, which acted like a spell upon all who listened to him. There was no waste in his oratory. His words and phrases were exact, inevitable, appropriate. He was intensely interesting to watch and listen to. There was dignity in his appearance and bearing. He might have stood to a sculptor as a model of self-confidence and command.

Parnell went into the land movement with extraordinary eagerness. He took on the whole programme—fair rents, fixity of tenure, free sale, land purchase. Davitt was wise enough to be satisfied with that platform. He kept Nationalisation at the back of his head for future use. And now Parnell became ubiquitous. Starting from Dublin in August, he swept through Leinster and Munster; Tipperary, Tullow, Cork, Navan, Enniscorthy, Limerick and Galway saw him in turn, and everywhere he felt in the enthusiasm of the crowds an unmistakable national endorsement of his leadership. He was beyond all question at the moment the most popular man in Ireland. His name raised cheers everywhere. His presence attracted thousands. His phrases passed from man to man. It is true that he was as yet accepted with very obvious reserve by the leading nationalist

newspaper of the country. The owner of the *Freeman's Journal* and member for Tipperary had not, as we have seen, called comfortably with him. When it was rumoured that Parnell had said Mr. Gray ought to be kicked out of the representation of Tipperary, that gentleman availed of the columns of his own newspaper to announce his disinclination to hold himself in any way committed to Parnell's "peculiar policy—if, indeed, he has any definite policy, which I sometimes doubt." "So far as I can comprehend his views and objects," Mr. Gray added, "I do not in many respects agree with them or consider them practicable, or even desirable." Finally, if he could only hold his seat by undertaking to follow Mr. Parnell's political lead, he could not accept any such condition. Needless to say, it was the people, not its proprietor, who finally and soon decided what should be the policy and convictions of the popular paper.

Parnell began his autumn campaign in the Rotunda, Dublin, on August 21. Addressing a city audience, he devoted himself almost entirely to the political question. Some of the more irreconcilable Fenians made trouble, but Parnell did not heed the interrupters, and they were ejected as fast as they intervened. He pleaded, as he did in his last days, for independent opposition in the British Parliament. "Show your power and make them feel it. One cannot always bite in an amiable manner. Sometimes you have to bite. Biting is not pleasant to the person who is bitten, and you cannot expect the person who is bitten to think you are the most angelic being in the world. Some of the Irish Party are not as honest as they ought to be. Some of them are lukewarm. Some a little too timid. But I prefer to keep it together than to sweep it away. Let us purge it, and strengthen it rather than disrupt it. Don't sweep away, except where sweeping away is necessary. I have been credited with the intention of attacking the constituencies throughout Ireland. Well, I tell you honestly, I don't know a dozen men whom I would care to send to Parliament. I am not at all certain that a dozen might not be more than sufficient for the work. Some men in the party might not like the work. Let men do the work they can do best. I have no doubt that after a while, as things progress, we shall be all, or a good many of us, working in the same groove. Legislative independence is what we want. The Irish question can't be settled till we are independent. Of course, if we cannot bring the country with us, if we find that we cannot get a sufficient force of men to carry out our ideas, it will be our duty to give up Parliamentary agitation al-

together"—whereat there were cheers—"but when I give up Parliamentary agitation, I don't promise to take up any other agitation. (A Voice—"The pike.") The future must be left to take care of itself." Such was the trend and almost the very words of this notable speech. He was exceedingly careful at this time to anticipate possible failure by casting the responsibility beforehand upon the people themselves. He gave them a personal, even an individual, concern in this great, new effort. Leading, he appeared to follow them.

When he went into the country the land became his theme. His pronouncements were vigorous, but careful. His censures of bad landlords were severe, but he was cautious and discriminating in his denunciation. As greatly as he liked the concrete, he preferred during this campaign to patronise the abstract; but his generalisations were significant enough for his purposes. All landlords were not bad, but, after all, the good landlords were unable to influence the agrarian system advantageously. And even the bad landlords were often bad because of the viciousness of the system in which they were involved. That system was vicious in the extreme. Bad landlords were the source and root of all the agrarian crime, of all the suffering and sorrow that had ever happened in this fair land. Well, he asked at Tullow, what were they to do with a landlord who was relentless towards a certain tenant? "Shoot him," said a voice from the crowd. "No, no," retorted Parnell, "I don't recommend that. Fortunately, it is not necessary; because I tell this man's poor tenant that if he holds hard, and if the tenantry of this country hold hard, you will triumph over this landlord and every landlord like him who comes forward and tries to grasp an exorbitant rent in these times." Finally, he told them to pay nothing unless they got a clear receipt. At Navan, he referred to the murder of Lord Leitrim, describing him as a landlord who was a scourge of the human race. At Limerick, he heard the most ominous cries shouted by the people. Cheers and cheers again were given for the Fenians while the priest who presided was addressing the meeting, but Parnell stuck fixedly to the point. He was now on the land problem, and he was not to be diverted from it to politics by any eagerness of the crowd. The rapacious landlord was again his quarry. With the men who had always shown themselves regardless of right and justice in their dealings with this question, it was necessary for them, he said, to maintain a firm and determined attitude. "Give them an ounce of lead," shouted one of the audience. But Parnell passed on. He told in a delightful way the old story of

the Sybil and the books, and applied it in the most alluring and effective style. The Sybil had come to Rome and offered all her volumes for sale. "That," he said, "is what the Irish farmer is now offering—I will give you a good bargain for a certain price." The offer was refused, and the Sybil departed. After a while she returned, and offered one volume less. That offer was again refused, and she went away again; and, finally, a bargain was made, and fewer books were obtained for the money than might have been had at the commencement. The moral was exquisitely obvious. The landlords had the chance of coming to terms, but as time went on they would get less and less, and at length all they would get would be very small compared with what they might have had, had they been sufficiently sensible in the beginning. Few men could tell a story to an audience and apply it more happily than Parnell. Some charming passages of the kind can be culled from his speeches. Again, he asked, suppose the landlords are not going to give the requisite reductions, what are the tenants going to do? Once more he cast the onus upon the people. "Shoot the landlords," shouted one of the crowd. But Parnell parried the point. He did not wish them to run down the landlords of Ireland. Many of them, he hoped the majority of them, were as good as they could be expected to be under the circumstances. At Galway he reiterated his now famous counsel: "Stand fast by your homesteads. Recollect that you have the interests of your children to contend for, the future of all Irishmen, justice, happiness and prosperity. If you are too cowardly, too disinclined to pluck the chance, to take advantage of the opportunity, then I say there is no hope for Ireland." His hard-headed, business-like speeches, fixing the attention of the farmers on a few stern facts, and inspiring them with belief in their own power to win relief, excited the peasantry as they had never been excited before. The League spread like wildfire; Parnell brought it everywhere with him.

The landlords were adamant. Some few made concessions, but in general they stood out for the pound of flesh. Evictions increased. Distress became very grievous. The wife of the Lord Lieutenant felt bound to act, and opened a fund for the hungry. The agitation grew more vehement as want pinched the people more and more. It was noted that firearms were making their way into the country. Voices were heard in the press calling the attention of the Government to the growing dangers of the situation. The Government were both lethargic and perplexed. They had almost run their full constitutional course. No one knew how the

approaching General Election would result. The Land League had become a gigantic weapon before the Ministry bestirred themselves. Meanwhile, some of the agitators had let their passions loose in whirling words and audacious menaces. The Fenians were well represented on the council and on the platforms of the League, and these men imparted to the movement a vigour and daring hitherto unknown to constitutional agitation.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRST PROSECUTIONS.

At last the Government were alarmed from their slumbers. Davitt held a meeting at Gurteen, a hamlet in Sligo, on November 2. He was supported by a local journalist named Daly and a young Ulster barrister named Killen. Their speeches were, indeed, as inflammatory as violent rhetoric could make them. Killen, for instance, while observing that there were reporters from London present to take down every word, so that by some little legal frippery they might be put in dungeons, ventured to observe that, as in other countries, they should obtain their rights by using the voice, the pen—he was going to say the sword, but swords were not used in that country. Whereupon Canon McDermott objected that the speaker should not advocate physical force. Killen denied the soft impeachment, but went on to say that he would like to see everyone there, and remember there were ten thousand people listening, armed with a rifle, and knowing how to use it. He finished with the sinister dictum: "The days of namby-pamby speaking are over."

Daly was perhaps more pertinent and not less vehement. "Will you submit to be evicted and put on the roadside?" he asked. "Don't allow yourselves to be evicted. Let no cowardly fellow be found to take the lands evicted. Don't pay the landlord until you have a guarantee from him or the Government that they won't see your children starving. Self-preservation is the first law of nature. Let them serve you with notice to quit, with ejectments; let them, if they like, proceed to the courts. Defend yourselves, but don't allow them to evict you. Then, supposing anyone is evicted, let you assemble and put him in again the next day; and if there is a coward enough found among you to take another man's land, then I hope he will be served as he deserves.

Davitt's speech was the least violent of all. Fixity of tenure, he said, was simply fixity of landlordism, fixity of poverty and degradation. Abolition of landlordism was the only certain remedy. The time had come when the manhood of Ireland must spring up to its feet, and say it would tolerate the system no longer. Why, he asked, should they be there in the noontide of the 19th century protesting against an immoral system of land laws, that had been swept from the face of every other civilised country. To that question they should give no indefinite answer. Then he spoke of the portion of their property the people might have put by for themselves. Well, it was for themselves, and not, in a year with impending famine and dire misfortune before them, to satisfy the greed and avarice of the landlords. They should look first to the necessities of their wives and children; to the wants and necessities of the coming winter; and when they had satisfied these wants and necessities, if they had a charitable disposition to meet the wants of the landlord, let them give him what they could spare, and no more. He confessed himself one of these peculiarly constituted Irishmen who believed that rent for land under any circumstances—prosperous times or bad times—was nothing more or less than an unjust and an immoral tax upon the industry of the people; and he further believed that landlordism was an open conspiracy against the wellbeing, prosperity, and happiness of a people; and everything that was immoral, whether it were rent or an open conspiracy of landlordism, had to be crushed by the people who suffered in consequence of it. Then he took them to the pounds, shillings and pence of the case, and pointed to the immense sums which went to a class that squandered the money abroad, everywhere but in Ireland, and ended up with an outburst such as had now become common on the platform in the West: "My friend, Mr. O'Connor," he exclaimed, "told you that it is probable the Government may have Zululand in its eye, when its officials and its organs talk about an emigration scheme, but I tell you I do not believe they meant that. There is a great similarity between the Irish pike and the Zulu assegai, and the English soldiers who went out to civilise the Zulus at the point of the bayonet, found that the savage Africans knew how to handle the assegai as our ancestors knew how to handle the pike in '98." That was the offence.

A hint in the *Freeman's Journal* of November 19 prepared the country for Government action. That very day Davitt, Daly and Killen were suddenly placed under arrest. Davitt and Killen were apprehended in Dublin, the former at 83

Amiens Street, where he then resided, and Daly was taken into custody at his home in County Sligo. A detective named John Mallon, who became one of the most notable police officers in Europe, arrested Davitt. It was he also who a few years later arrested Parnell, and who played a conspicuous part in tracking down the assassins of the Invincible conspiracy. The prisoners were carried swiftly to Sligo, where the preliminary enquiry was conducted against them.

If the Government thought to overawe the people by this swoop they must have seen their error very soon. So far from spreading dismay, the arrests awakened a new enthusiasm, and it was quickly perceived that the agitation had gone too far to be checked by such a stratagem. The organisation had been completed; the committal of the people to its doctrines and injunctions was now absolute; suppression was out of the question. Besides, the authorities grievously misjudged the movement. On the very day on which the agitators were laid by the heels, the announcement was made that, the Saturday following, the first eviction since the formation of the Land League would be perpetrated in the West, and that the victim marked down by his landlord had a family at that moment stricken with virulent fever. Immediately the news of the arrests spread a placard was posted all over Mayo containing these words:—"Fellow-countrymen.—The hour of trial is come. Your leaders are arrested. Davitt and Daly are in prison. You know your duty. Will you do it? Yes; you will. Balla is the place of meeting; Saturday the day." Balla was, in fact, the place where this first eviction was to take place. There were all the materials here for a terrible conflagration.

Anthony Dempsey was the name of the tenant on whom the threat of eviction lay. He held a small farm on the crest of a steep hill, about a mile outside the village of Balla. He owed a year's rent. His landlord was Sir Robert Lynch Blosse. Possession of the land had already been taken on behalf of the lord of the soil, but the family had been allowed to remain in their cabin because the tenant's father and children were lying sick of fever. The sheriff gave a week's respite, and Saturday, November 22, was to be the fatal day. The news spread. It was regarded as a test case. The gauntlet had been flung down to the Land League in the very county of its birth. All eyes and hearts were centered on Dempsey's miserable and fever-stricken hovel. The people were profoundly moved. Excitement grew. The calling of the meeting was the answer of the League to the Government's challenge. The authorities poured soldiers

and police into Mayo. The tenants became all the more indignant and enraged. So far the agitation had been unstained by crime or bloodshed. Would it stand this dread ordeal and preserve this enviable record? No restraint was to be expected of the Government. In this really desperate emergency Parnell acted with splendid coolness, courage, and sagacity. He determined to be present at the eviction and to take the people in hand himself.

His first act was to issue a placard to bring the outraged feelings of the people under some measure of control :—“ Parnell and Davitt to the People of Mayo.—Men of Mayo,” thus it ran, “ we earnestly counsel such of you as intend to be witnesses of the eviction scene to be dignified, orderly and peaceful in your conduct. The future of our movement depends on your attitude this day. Give no excuse for violence on the part of the Government and our great cause is won.” He then hastened from Dublin, taking with him Mr. John Dillon and Mr. Thomas Sexton. He found Mayo seething with rumour and excitement. Reporters from the London papers had been hurried to the scene. Troops were in readiness at all points. It was said that a military officer posted in Castlebar had declared that the soldiers would disperse any assemblage with bullets, and that the leaders would be specially picked off.

On the memorable morning bodies of determined men came into Balla from all points of the compass. Contingents marched from Kiltimagh, Claremorris and Ballina. They carried sticks, and no one could mistake the determination on their faces. A banner was carried displaying the words : “ In Memoriam, Allen, Larkin and O’Brien,” and “ God Save our Martyred Three,” for the morrow was the twelfth anniversary of the executions at Manchester. Parnell was early astir. A procession was formed as the contingents arrived, and one of the most extraordinary demonstrations ever witnessed in Ireland moved through the little village. “ The procession,” wrote one of the journalists present, “ was one of the most remarkable I have ever seen.” Eight thousand stalwart men marched four abreast through Balla and out towards Dempsey’s home. The conduct of this formidable body was irreproachable. Their ranks were disciplined. There were no sounds except the tread of the march upon the road. When Dempsey’s hill was reached it was seen that the fields overhead were full of armed constabulary, who fell into rank at the approach of the procession. It was a moment full of danger. Parnell was ready.

Placing himself at the head of the marchers the self-possessed young leader breasted the hill. He was the first to begin the ascent. That he was prepared for the very worst that could happen there can be no question. Throughout he behaved with indomitable *sang froid*. Yet however dauntless and calm he was, he must have felt immensely relieved when Dempsey came towards him, and said that the sheriff had again postponed the eviction. But all danger was not yet passed. The people continued their march up the hill; the head of the column divided, and two separate bodies began to coil round the hillside, so as to surround Dempsey's cabin and the police force. The police became alarmed, and indeed the situation was full of deadly peril. The officers made their men ready to retire, and the slightest act of aggression on either side would at this moment of extreme tension have provoked a desperate and bloody conflict.

Again Parnell was equal to the emergency. He flung himself forward, caught the attention of the huge crowd, fixed their eyes upon him, and instantly stopped the menacing dispositions they had begun to make. He had averted all risk of bloodshed by his incomparable command over the critical moment. He now brought the people together; a rath some fifty yards from Dempsey's cabin was used as a platform, and a meeting, wholly characterised by orderly enthusiasm, was conducted in the presence and hearing of the constabulary. The self-possession and confident attitude of the people were noticed by all observers, but at least one of the orators gave full rein to his passionate emotions in the most turbulent rhetoric.

Mr. Joseph Brennan, Davitt's fellow secretary of the Land League, broke through almost all the bounds of discretion. He voiced the protest of the people against the eviction "and the possible death of nine creatures," and against the arrest of Davitt and his comrades. But, he said, they would go on until the last trace of feudal landlordism was swept out of the country. Their cause could not be imprisoned. Their lives were no longer their own. They belonged to their country and justice, and they must consecrate them that day to the advancement of the cause for which their friends were suffering. The hour of resolve and act had arrived. Brennan was a man of great natural eloquence, and he now proceeded to invoke it in describing what they might have had to witness on the hilltop. In burning sentences full of dramatic power, he depicted the poor fellow lying within the cabin, the hot fever darting wildly through his brain, the little child crying

for a morsel of bread, and sending pangs worse than bayonet stabs through the mother's heart; and then he invited them to think of the evictor, who had fled the country lest his ears might catch the execration of the people, and who had all the enjoyments and luxuries of life out of the money which the sweat of the poor fellow yonder had wrought from the land. He allured their minds to the past, to fatal '47, to the blazing roof-tree, the workhouse, the emigrant ship, the starvation, the death, the coffinless graves. "Then tell me to-day," he abjured his hearers, "will you be true to the preaching of our friends in prison? Shall our generation witness such scenes as '47?" He directed his gaze to the black, massed squads of policemen who stood ready beyond the crowd, and to them this fiery speech was spoken:—"I appeal to one class in the community especially—I appeal to the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and I ask them are they content to remain or become the destroyers of their people, of their own kith and kin? Look at a possible future. Look at your own brother lying in yonder ditch, dead and naked; the last garment was sold to buy a measure of milk for the poor child in whose body the teeth of the lean dog is now fastened, and are you human nature, can you look upon such scenes, strong men as you are, without feeling your knees tremble and a curse gurgling in your throats. Need I remind you that in '47, when you were called on to do work similar to that with which you are now threatened, when one of your force fired upon an unhappy crowd, and found five minutes later his bullet had lodged in the breast of the mother that bore him. You are Irishmen, and I doubt not that beneath many a police jacket a warm Irish heart beats. Are you content, then, to be the destroyers of your own people? Will you rather twine hands with them and snatch victory from death, and save the lives of the people?" Such a passage rings like melodrama on the ears of a later and less frenzied generation, but declaimed beside Dempsey's cabin to an audience of police facing thousands of oppressed and protesting peasants it amazed the listeners like a sudden convulsion of nature.

Brennan then returned to the people. He told them that the land of Ireland belonged to the people of Ireland; that they should pay no rent until they got a reasonable reduction; that they should take no land from which another man had been evicted; and that should such "a mean wretch be found in Mayo" who snatched such a farm, they should mark him well, and cast him out of the society of man as an unclean thing. "Let none of you be found to buy with him or sell

with him, and watch how the modern Iscariot will prosper." Oratory could reach no greater heights of violence, nor could a better illustration be given of the stage of intensity which the agitation had attained.

Parnell listened intently while Brennan searched the souls of his audience. He now addressed the gathering in his most characteristically imperturbable style. He was not displeased that the people should have their passions played upon by his rash young subordinate, but it was his duty and his desire to compose them before they dispersed, and to do it without spoiling the effect which Brennan had achieved. "After the magnificent speech of Mr. Brennan," he observed quietly, "it would ill become me to occupy your time with many words of mine. As he told you, these days are days not for words, but for action, and upon your action to-day in coming here in the face of every intimidation, calm and determined, to do your duty to your suffering fellow-creatures in yonder cabin, you have shown that you know how to distinguish what your duty is to your country to-day. It is too true that in these days Ireland's most devoted and talented sons are marked out for imprisonment, and I very much fear that the result of the lead that Mr. Brennan has taken in this movement will be that he may also be sent to share the fate of Davitt, Daly and Killen." The movement which began with the Irishtown meeting, he went on, had set the handwriting on the wall foretelling the downfall of the most infamous system of land tenure the world had ever seen. He congratulated the people on their attitude, "within the law," he was careful to add. Their rulers might violate the constitution. "We are not going to follow them," he observed piquantly. "You have shown that in keeping a firm grip on your homesteads and in refusing to pay an unjust rent that you know well that in that advice is your only safety. Don't allow provocation to draw you from your duty. Let the leaders go : others will take their places. I merely wished to come into your midst to-day, for I feared a terrible event was going to happen before our eyes, and I say I could not feel that I would have done my duty if I had allowed the people to go into danger and to remain away myself. It is the part of a coward to encourage others to take a position that he is not prepared to maintain himself, and I wished to come here to-day to join you in whatever fortune might befall you. Thank God, the eyes of the cruel landlord who was threatening a black, a very black deed upon this day have been opened to the reality of the position. Thank God, we, on the eve almost of what appeared to be the first eviction in

this land agitation, have been spared that terrible affliction." They had been spared that experience, though he confessed he trembled to think what would have been the result; and he exhorted them again to be calm and determined, self-respecting and self-reliant. "Our country," he concluded, "is a great country, worth fighting for. We have opportunities denied our forefathers. Remain within the law and constitution. Let us stand, even though we have to stand on the last plank of the constitution; let us stand until that plank is taken from under our feet."

Thus ended in peace and quietness the most dangerous moment the Land League had yet encountered. It was a great personal triumph for Parnell. He had exhibited that kind of pluck which the peasantry most admire. In a moment of extreme danger he had taken his stand at their head. He seemed to invite to himself the perils intended for them. He placed himself between them and the violence of the authorities, and it seemed as if it were he, and he alone, who had wafted that danger away. He had completely demonstrated his physical courage and his consummate command over a crowd of excited and exasperated peasantry. His prestige stood immeasurably higher at the close than it was at the dawn of that memorable day.

But his prediction of Brennan's fate was fulfilled promptly to the very letter. He was arrested by Detective Mallon in Dublin on December 5, and taken to Castlebar. Four of the leaders were now under lock and key, but the League travelled like a prairie fire, and the spirits of the people rose higher as the Government showed its teeth. The preliminary magisterial investigations were conducted in Sligo. As the day approached, excitement spread through the west, and again the wildest rumours went from mouth to mouth. It was said, for instance, that a quantity of arms had been landed at Rosses's Point, and that Parnell had been arrested.

Davitt took the whole affair light-heartedly. "I ought to be well used to this kind of thing," he said to one who visited him in prison; "but it is not fair to put a man in jail for having the best of the argument."

Ten thousand people crowded into Sligo the day the trials began. Parnell again made it his business to be present. Mr. John Dillon travelled with him from Dublin. The proceedings were exactly similar to those with which Ireland had been familiar in innumerable cases of the kind in former days, and to which it was to become even more accustomed in the times ahead. The prosecuting counsel was Mr. Monroe, Q.C., who, as the *Freeman's Journal* was able to remind him,

had himself, when a candidate for Parliamentary honours, stumped County Louth as a tenant-right advocate. He now distinguished himself by a sneer at Davitt for having forgotten the clemency of the Crown, to which the haughty felon retorted that he remembered the eight years of vengeance he had suffered upon the evidence of a salaried perjurer for an act of which he was as innocent as Mr. Monroe. True, he had sent firearms into Ireland, but for that he made no apology. The prosecutor discarded on sedition, and short-hand writers read aloud the offensive speeches, but the sole effect of the proceedings was to give Jerry Stringer, one of the constabulary stenographers, a place in the comic history of the country, and to afford an opportunity to an eccentric Belfast solicitor named Rea for a series of forensic contortions such as had never before been seen in a court of justice. The prisoners were all returned for trial at the Winter Assizes. Meanwhile Davitt pursued his campaign. At Killannin he burst into verse, as he often did on the platform :—

“ Land for the hands that till it,
Land for the seeds they sow,
Land that is yours when you get it,
Yes, without striking a blow.
Aye, from each rooftree and steeple—
If you but will it again—
Land for the landless people,
Land for the children of men.”

That was his synopsis in doggerel of the motives of his restless activity.

The Government now perceived that they had betrayed themselves into an impossible position. The prosecutions were treated, to outward appearance at any rate, as a joke. The evidence of the police stenographers and witnesses was not as conclusive as was desirable. It was admitted that the meetings and speeches complained of had not been followed by disturbances and crime. On the contrary, the demeanour of the people had been faultless. Besides, the arrests had not the slightest effect in stemming the agitation. Quite the reverse. On the night of the first day of the trials Parnell had improved his opportunity by founding a branch of the Land League in the town of Sligo itself. He had even presumed to intervene within the courthouse, and to make sure that Davitt would be admitted to bail. The only person shocked by the intervention was Mr. John Rea, who informed the Irish leader that he was not “ such a pontifically great

man," and that it would be discovered by people when they found out his real capacity that he was an exceedingly small man. Rea was appearing on behalf of Mr. Killen, but he was, in fact, the pantaloone of the pantomime.

The first hint of the Government's vacillation came in *The World* newspaper of London. "Mr. Lowther," it said, "is not on good terms with his political chief. He advised strongly against the recent arrests. Downing Street superseded the Irish Executive," and added that there was a growing belief that a conviction could not be obtained, and that the mishap was a fresh political blunder of "Benjamin, the impulsive Premier."

Everybody was now prepared for a breakdown on the part of the authorities in Dublin Castle. The Crown lawyers were sent down to the Four Courts to obtain a writ of *certiorari*, removing the trials from the Winter Assizes in Connaught into the Court of Queen's Bench at Dublin, and it was then apparent that the Government had thrown up the sponge. It was, therefore, no surprise when the judge of assize having been handed the writ of *certiorari*, the prisoners were released on bail, and the last had been heard of the precipitous prosecutions. In the first trial of strength, the agitators had clearly won the day.

And now the last state was assuredly worse than the first. The League already regarded itself as invincible. The tone of the agitation became defiant. Distress became more and more acute, until even the Viceregal Court was thrown into something not far removed from consternation. Landlords alone remained obdurate. The agents and bailiffs were showering processes for rent broadcast. The sheriffs were thundering at every cabin door. The people were hardened into the fiercest determination by the sheer impossibility of satisfying the demands of the rent offices and by the audacious encouragements of their leaders. Ireland was in a paroxysm of passion. The future was full of terror. Parnell decided to carry his campaign to the United States of America. At Liverpool he addressed fifty thousand Irish in the square at the front of St. George's Hall. It was a remarkable occasion. He spoke from a platform surrounded by a bodyguard of a thousand stalwarts, many of them armed with revolvers, for the Orangemen of the city had issued a proclamation threatening to break up the "seditious gathering." The Nationalists replied by preparing to meet force with force, and their preparations were sufficient to secure them from molestation. Parnell sailed in the "Scythia," and reached New York on the second last day of this epoch-making year.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOOKING UNDER THE SURFACE.

It is not very easy to decide the relative importance of the parts played by Davitt and Parnell in the land movement thus far. That Davitt angled most industriously for Parnell's help is sure enough. He himself narrates how he used to seek him out in these early days and ply him with arguments in favour of fostering the agrarian agitation and combining the tenant-farmers into a single national organisation. On the other hand, there is more than the possibility that Parnell was really using Davitt for his own deliberate purposes. The admirers of the young Fenian will have it that he almost forced Parnell into the land question, and that Parnell only flung himself into it when the agitation became too strong for him—that, in fact, he was swept off his feet. But this is both true and untrue. Political and social movements are rarely if ever constructed by statesmen, and the wise statesman will long hesitate to plan movements that go to the roots of existence. It is not the business of the practical statesman and politician to be ahead of his time, but abreast of it. It is as fatal an error to outdistance the cravings of a people as to lag generations behind current opinions. It may, therefore, be assumed that Parnell was not anxious to commit himself to an agrarian programme until he saw how the people would take to it. He may well have looked upon Davitt as one who had nothing to lose by making the first trials in the great experiment. It would, in fact, have been most characteristic of him to watch Davitt's preliminary results before attaching himself inevitably to the new agitation. Nor would anything have been more in consonance with his nature, cold and calculating, than to leave the passionately enthusiastic Celt under the impression that it was no mean achievement to win his countenance and support.

Besides, Parnell must have read Davitt through and through before he had known him long. Before the problem had crystallised into a definite scheme in Davitt's fertile brain he had made political overtures to Parnell, and Parnell, in the most artful and complimentary fashion, had waved him off. He knew he could rely on Davitt to make any experiment, however risky, on which he had once set his heart and mind. He was forced to see beyond all possibility of doubt that such men desired to have him on their side. Anyone who had correctly gauged Parnell's temperament and

character could, consequently, have forecasted his attitude and action without much chance of mistake. It was his obvious course to toy with them, and make them first prove that they were worth his adhesion. This is the most probable explanation of any reluctance he appeared to display when Davitt urged him to organise the Irish farmers for a decisive fight with Irish landlordism. We must not forget that the grievances and disadvantageous position of the tenantry were amongst the very first subjects on which he thought when he entered upon a public career. Before Davitt had been released at all he had given it marked attention.

Nor can it be forgotten that the Land League would very likely have been impossible, despite the titantic energy and self-sacrificing resolve of Davitt, but for a conjunction of circumstances which, even without the presence of Davitt at all, would have produced a violent convulsion in 1879 and 1880. The condition of the tenantry became so acutely miserable that there would either have been a clearance comparable with that of the 'forties and 'fifties or such an outbreak of disorder as would have swept this more liberally-minded generation of statesmen into drastic reforms. It is Davitt's title to enduring fame that he forestalled by a very little time the social convulsion and organised and disciplined discontent, so that it directed itself to certain well-defined objects. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that he got hold of the forces that would have produced inevitable anarchy and fashioned them into a weapon for a few fixed purposes.

Davitt exhibited great commonsense in veiling his land nationalisation theories as much as possible. It has been said that he had difficulty in making Parnell swallow even occupying ownership. There were suspicions regarding him upon that topic. "Are you in favour of land purchase, Mr. Parnell?" Mr. John Sweetman was heard to ask him on one occasion. "I am," he replied. "Well, you have not given it to your own tenants," said the tormentor. "They have not asked me," was the unanswerable retort. It was his attitude, in a nutshell, on the whole agrarian question. He was not going to force upon people more than they asked or believed they could win. I know no better definition of a practical statesman.

It is also to be observed that Parnell was bound to be cautious where Davitt was concerned. He was up to his neck in the secret physical force movement. The men of that movement Parnell was desperately anxious to win to his support, but without himself touching the movement in any shape or form. He could not have seen, what was indeed

the fact, that Davitt had begun to lose faith in oath-bound secrecy, and to perceive that the Irish are farcical conspirators. Davitt himself had many of the qualities of the born conspirator. On that very account he saw all the more clearly how ludicrous it was to expect the ebullient, garrulous, and excessively hospitable Irish race to quench their very nature in plot and counter-stroke. *Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret.*

But there was an even greater reason why Parnell would have been likely to hold back until the cat had jumped. He was more a politician than a statesman. All his characteristics were those of most use in politics : he had caution, a certain aloofness, which restrained familiarity, a grasp of concrete issues, an eminently practical turn of mind, doggedness in a fight, imperviousness to censure, limitless courage, a profound belief in himself and his capacity, perfect command over his temper, calmness in a difficulty, and unscrupulousness in attaining his ends. In a cynical age, some of these things will be considered rather vices than virtues, but no matter how the world may change, if politics continue to be a necessary pursuit of men, such qualities will continue to achieve most salutary results. And he who would imply from their enumeration censure of the Irish leader must remember that they did not complete the strange and complex personality of Parnell.

Davitt, on the other hand, was not a politician. He only thought he was. He was that paradox—an idealist with a practical bent. He could never have been a successful political leader. His sympathies were too expansive. His nature was too averse from injustice. He heard too many cries for help, and they pierced his soul too deeply. He was always in the lifeboat, and not a few of the rescues he effected must have hugely amused himself. But it is important to keep this political inaptitude in mind in connection with the land agitation which he created. He must have raised in such a mind as Parnell's a very grave misgiving, for he deliberately resolved to tack on an immense social problem to the great and paramount national issue. Parnell did not think quickly or variously as a rule. One thing at a time was more to his liking. He probably scented in Davitt's method danger to the cause to which he gave chief allegiance. It is nothing to the point to observe that our experience has now taught us that such misgivings as he may have entertained were not soundly based. No man can be blamed for refusing to take the future on the word of another. Home Rule would, beyond all shadow of doubt, have solved the land question.

In those days it took longer to reach Dublin from Belmullet than from London. There was no knowing how long Home Rule would be delayed at Loughrea and Westport if all Davitt's business in these quarters had to be finished before the coach could head for College Green.

Fortunately, nature and the landlords solved all doubts. If a vast number of the Irish people were to be saved from destruction it was imperative that the land question should be tackled manfully and at once. When that became apparent all Parnell's hesitation dissolved, and from that on he saw the attainable end much more clearly than did Davitt. Nor can one resist the conclusion that he determined simultaneously to take the entire leadership absolutely into his own hands. He did not wholly succeed. He had more than once to yield to a conflict of wishes. Davitt was too transparently honest and too obviously the prey to patriotic zeal to be ousted easily from the affections of the people, and the Government, by marking him out as a victim, kept his repute sound in the hearts of the people. The terrible risk he ran was a weighty passport to their favour. They knew that he was a free man merely by the "clemency of the Crown," and that the moment he became obnoxious to the dominant caste and troublesome to the authorities, they had only to send him back to the hell of penal servitude. Seven years of his unexpired sentence hung like the sword of a Damocles over his head, and Crown lawyers and Ministers were callously careful to remind him of the ghastly fact. To his credit be it said, that not only did this serious disability not weigh with him, but he never showed resentment when the great political leader appeared to overshadow him in the organisation which he had practically founded.

It must also be conceded that the theory upon which Davitt proceeded was correct. He had been led to that theory by the failure of Fenianism. Fenianism had failed because, amongst other reasons, it had not succeeded in winning the active support of the mass of the Irish people. It was all very well for high-minded and fearless political idealists like Charles Kickham and John O'Leary to prefer dreams to beef-steaks. The faith which moves mountains is not inspired by abstractions. As early as 1878, during his first visit to America, Davitt had struck the weak point of Fenianism a merciless blow on the head when he pointed out that if the Nationalists wanted the Irish farmer to believe in and labour for Irish independence they had first to show that they wished and were powerful enough to stand between him and "the power which a single Englishman wields over him." In

other words, they should give him something to look forward to beside the hope of a paper constitution. It almost goes without saying that the figure-heads of Fenianism could not tolerate such views. It was not long before Davitt was expelled from the Supreme Council, and he soon ceased to attend meetings of the Brotherhood even as a member. If the land agitation swept Parnell off his feet it swept Davitt also from his political bearings. The revolutionary notions he harboured at the beginning of "the new departure" he cast one by one, as a host of practical problems thronged his mind and fastened his sympathies on the pressing necessities of his fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PARNELL FOUNDS A PARTY.

WHEN Parnell arrived in America in the dying hours of 1879 he was the unquestioned and unquestionable leader of the Irish in Ireland and England, but he was not yet acknowledged by the Irish Parliamentarians as their chief. When Butt died, the young Wicklowman was the most prominent and popular member in the Irish Party, such as it was. He had, however, but a handful, five or six, followers in the disruptive Parliamentary game he had taken up from Ronayne and Bigger. He was altogether too shrewd to put himself in nomination for the vacant leadership. In any case, he would not have got it then. The majority of Irish members were moderate men, who regarded him as a bit of a nuisance. Accordingly, they fixed on a Mr. Shaw, not to fill Butt's shoes—that was out of the question—but to act as Chairman of the Irish representatives. The feeling of the moderates within and without the Parliamentary circle was correctly voiced by the *Freeman's Journal*, still looking askance at the Wicklow guerilla:—"The country," it wrote, "will thoroughly approve both of the resolution adopted at the meeting and of the selection made by it—the Irish public will also approve of the action of the meeting in not appointing a leader. Leaders of parties are chosen by the process of national selection, and not by a vote. When the time comes the leader will come also. The Achilles of the party is gone. In the fulness of time some one will be found to bend the bow of the hero." This picturesque conclusion had the merit of commonsense, and in any case Hercules himself had an-

nounced that he was young, and could afford to wait. Meanwhile he waited as Hercules should—fighting.

His work in America was to obtain bread for the hungry peasants and funds for the new organisation. Some little monetary help for the Land League had already been sent from the United States, and had been used to defray urgent expenses of the movement, but as it came from a fund subscribed originally for criminal purposes, Davitt, when this fact became clear to him, insisted upon paying back the entire sum received, out of his own pocket. To the end of his days he was absurdly correct in money matters, and he was determined from the inception of the agrarian agitation that it would be unstained by crime or criminal associations if he could possibly keep it pure and unsullied.

The American campaign was a veritable *tour de force*. It would be hard to find in the world of politics a similar display of incessant activity. The physical labour alone of Parnell and Dillon was herculean. They ranged the vast territory of the States, travelling by night and day, from city to city, addressing large audiences, and stirring up enthusiasm wherever they went. They were on the road for the two months of January and February. In less than sixty days they appeared in sixty-two of the cities of the Republic. Some of the railway journeys exceeded a thousand miles in length. Altogether, more than ten thousand miles were covered, and before they set foot again on Irish soil they had travelled more than sixteen thousand miles in less than three months. Before they left America they had collected £50,000 sterling. Colossal episodes of this kind were forgotten by many of his fellow-countrymen in the last few years of Parnell's life. The labours of Gambetta after the debacle at Sedan are alone comparable with this desperate crusade for a nation on the edge of disaster.

From a political point of view, the tour was a ticklish affair. Irish extremists are very often irreconcilable in exact proportion to their distance from Ireland, and to say this is not to sneer at them. It is only when they have gone abroad into the atmosphere of free countries and felt the responsibility of citizenship that these men have fully realised the meaning and degradation of slavery. Such men, exasperated into secret conclaves and criminal conceptions, looked upon all parley with England as high treason to Ireland, and they had several crows to pluck with Parnell. It is possible that he disliked England as heartily as any of them, but he was engaged in weaning his fellow-countrymen from Fenian camps into constitutional leagues. Besides, he knew his

speeches would be read as with a microscope by friend and foe alike. It might well be as ticklish to face the House of Commons later on as it was to face the American Fenians now.

In this dilemma he sailed as close to the wind as he possibly could. Amongst speeches which became famous were those that he delivered at Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Rochester. They are the speeches of a man playing a risky game, and playing it with amazing audacity and adroitness. The people of Ireland must be prevented from being starved to death—he relied upon that peremptory and afflicting demand to secure him a patient hearing. As for the rest, Ireland was about to strike a vital blow at landlordism, and that was the first step to the nationhood for which she had struggled so long. He pointed to the Irish-American regiments he had seen, and averred that Sarsfield's dying words rushed through his mind: "Oh, that I could carry these arms for Ireland"—a misquotation of the legendary words which, if deliberate, was exceedingly cunning. But landlordism was the corner stone of English misrule. Undermine that corner stone, and the ultimate goal came into sight; and what was that ultimate goal?—"None of us will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England." He admitted that it was an Irishman's duty to shed his blood for his country's rights—"if there were a probable chance of success." But "we must act with prudence when the contest would be hopeless, and not rush upon destruction." I am much inclined to think that we get nearer to the heart and mind of Parnell in these American speeches than in any others he ever spoke at home or abroad. The more he is studied the more intense his nationalism is seen to have been. True, it was unlike Davitt's nationalism. It was narrow and confined and exclusive. "I am an Irishman first," he once said, "but a Wicklowman afterwards."

Although the tour was a huge success, Parnell's own description of it was the very quintessence of modesty: "When John Dillon and I had sufficiently depressed the meeting," he said to Mr. T. P. O'Connor, "we went round with our hats and collected money." From the United States he went into Canada, and there, too, his reception surpassed all expectations. He had cabled for Mr. Tim Healy to join him and act as his secretary, and that gentleman has narrated how at Montreal, in the course of a great demonstration, Parnell was called for the first time "the uncrowned king of Ireland," but he sat still in a tempest of

enthusiasm, and with that far-away look in his eyes which was often noticed throughout his life, seemed to brood over thoughts that were far away from the exciting scene before him. He had the distinction of addressing the American Congress, and the famous 69th Infantry of New York, one of the great Irish regiments of the Civil War, paraded in his honour the morning he sailed for home. It was a bitter morning of snow and sleet, but "Parnell," said Healy, "stood on the bridge the whole time until the tender left with head uncovered; and it was a fine sight to see the 69th salute as we sailed off, and Parnell wave his hand in response, looking like a king." I have myself seen many instances of his unconcern for the elements.

Before leaving America he met once more the lady whom he had wooed eight years before, when he would in all probability have married her, but that her father would not consent to her leaving America and Parnell would not settle there. Now the Irish lover sought her out again, but discovered that his ardour had cooled. She was a pretty girl, with golden hair and blue eyes and dainty features. He accompanied her to a ball. As they were walking upstairs she put into his hand a slip of paper, on which she had written Elizabeth Barrett Browning's lines :

"Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
On the absent face that fixed you,
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast
Through behoving and unbehoving,
Unless you can die when the dream is past,
Oh, never call it loving."

It is quite plain that Parnell was too little of the *dilettante* to mate well with such a partner. At any rate, the application of her quotation is not as obvious as it seems at first sight. Parnell applied the lines wholly to himself. "I could not do that," he explained afterwards, "so I went home." Not, however, before he had seen the lady that same evening suddenly attracted by a young lawyer who had just entered the room. The Irishman thereupon decided that his hesitation had lost him the lady. He was reserved for a more fatal destiny in love.

By the time he left America he had squared the Fenians there. Those of them who were not actually won over to his side were persuaded to patience with the movement now on trial. All other classes on the Continent were his devoted worshippers. He was quickly reaching the zenith of his power and fame.

Meanwhile, Davitt was in sole charge of the Land League. He spread propagandist literature far and wide. The meetings were kept going in full swing. There was now the assurance that the organisation would not lack money. The American Land League, founded by Parnell, was to see to that vital detail. Davitt by this time had spent on the League nearly all the money he had earned by his first lecturing tour in England and America. His only resource besides lecturing was newspaper correspondence, sufficient no doubt for his immediate simple wants, but no more. The American money, therefore, arrived barely in the nick of time. Cash poured across the ocean in a golden flood. Some £72,000 had been received, and the stimulating stream which gave hope and heart to the political agitation continued ceaselessly for years. The money which was sent over in the first year was, of course, very largely used for the relief of the hungry peasantry, but it was understood clearly enough that the object of the subscribers was that after this famine had been beaten down, the cash should be devoted to the agrarian and political movement. Speaking in Dublin the month after his return, Parnell took care to stress that point with the greatest and perhaps most awkward emphasis: "The Americans sent me back," he declared, "with this message—that for the future you must not expect one cent for charity, but millions for the land system. And now before I go I will tell you a little incident that happened at one of our meetings in America. A gentleman came on the platform and handed me twenty-five dollars, and said, 'Here is five dollars for bread and twenty for lead.' " It would be very hard to match this confidence for candour and indiscretion. At the same time imprudence is not invariably indiscreet, and Parnell had elevated rashness to something very like an art. The politician, like the general, who does not know how and when to take risks may win many battles but few campaigns.

It was the sudden dissolution of Parliament that sped Parnell from America. The Tories had held office for five years. They had had their good days and bad, like most Governments. The orientation of British policy by Disraeli had gone on with varying success. Gladstone had been in semi-retirement almost all this time. He had handed in his gun as Liberal leader at the beginning of the Parliament. His own explanation is that he thought things were going to be quiet, and readers may make out of that explanation what they can. The Liberals had, therefore, fallen under the joint leadership of Granville and Hartington. The Near Eastern gyrations of Dizzy, now Lord Beaconsfield, irritated the old

war horse to temper, and by 1878 he was again leading anything that was worth leading in the Liberal Party. In 1879 he was in the very front of the fray. Towards the end of the year he invaded Midlothian, and raked the Tory Administration fore and aft. Beaconsfield, a master of political legerdemain, sprang the General Election like a bolt from the blue, and thought to hide the luxuriant shortcomings of his *regime* by making Ireland and Home Rule the issue. In a letter, dated March 8, 1880, to the Lord Lieutenant, he announced with Hebraic gravity that something worse than famine and pestilence distracted Ireland—that an effort was afoot to sever the bond of Union between the two islands. The disintegration of the United Kingdom was, therefore, the shibboleth upon which he hoped to hoodwink the electorate. Some countenance was lent to this flagrant dishonesty by the fact that several candidates at by-elections in English constituencies where there were substantial bodies of Irish voters had thought it wise to take the very mild Home Rule pledge concocted by Butt. That most of them took it with a significant wink was well known to the Premier.

However, immediately the letter announced the coming trial of strength a scene of political activity such as these countries have seldom witnessed developed throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Gladstone closed his Homer with a bang, and spurred north to Edinburgh. Beaconsfield alone of the great politicians kept to his quarters. Salisbury was away from home, and Hatfield had been lent to the Premier. It was there he sat and watched the results arrive which decreed his political extinction. The Liberals gained a victory which was only surprising for its magnitude.

Parnell was summoned by cable. He was speaking in Montreal when the momentous news came. He landed at Queenstown on March 21. The actual dissolution had taken place three days before. The first election in Ireland was fixed for April 1. He started therefore with a loss of time, but it did not prove a serious disadvantage. He became ubiquitous. He traversed Ireland several times in the contest; spoke over the situation with candidates; was constantly on the platform; and put forth the vigour of a dozen men. His greatest difficulty was the finance of the struggle. £100 reached him from his supporters in Liverpool, £250 belonging to the enemy fell into his hands by accident at Cork, and he borrowed £1,000 as a personal loan. On this slender capital the most momentous General Election Ireland had ever undergone was fought by the young leader.

The day he landed at Queenstown he got an inkling that

even from the strong Nationalists of the country he could not look for that measure of support which the high importance of the occasion demanded. A body of Fenians presented him with an address, expressing their conviction of the hopelessness of constitutional agitation, and the determination of "the Nationalists of the country as a political party" to take neither hand, act, nor part in the contests. They belonged to a party which has never taken a modest view of its numerical strength, and the phrase was absurd. At the same time Parnell was in need of all the help he could get. The majority of the priests supported him. Several of the hierarchy did not, but the Archbishop of Cashel did, and he was indeed a host in himself. The extremists—whatever their numbers—gave trouble. At Enniscorthy he was treated to the grossest indignities. An Irish political mob can reach any depth of unreason. The opposition on this remarkable occasion came from supporters of the sitting member, Chevalier O'Clery, who had not given satisfaction to the forward wing of the Irish representation at Westminster, and also probably from the physical force element. About five thousand people assembled around the platform at the foot of Castle Hill. Uproar reigned from the very beginning of the meeting. Parnell's followers were in the minority, and when he tried to address them he was promptly howled into silence. Sticks were instantly raised, and a scene of vulgar violence ensued, in the course of which a man seized Parnell by the legs and tried to pull him from the platform. One of the reporters, Mr. Dunlop, saved the Irish leader by bringing the knob of his umbrella down on the knuckles of his assailant, and Parnell again faced the angry crowd, "looking sad and sorrowful, but not at all angry," says Mr. John Redmond, who was present; "it was an awful picture of patience." An egg hurled from the mob struck him on the beard and trickled down. Parnell himself said he thought it was an orange, and later on further improved his version by denying that he had been struck at all. Mr. Dunlop says he became absolutely livid when struck by the missile. The fib was probably the outcome of shame for his fellow-countrymen. He managed to leave the platform without further injury, got a waiter in the hotel to stitch his trousers while he was eating lunch, and was mobbed again in the streets as he walked to the railway station. Redmond, by his side, was knocked down and cut on the face, and was consoled by Parnell with the grim jocosity: "Well, you have shed your blood for me at all events." With all this bother, Barry and Byrne, his nominees, won in Wexford.

Meanwhile he himself had been nominated for Meath and Mayo. He was, in addition, put forward for Cork City under humorous and extraordinary circumstances. A Whig, a Conservative, and a Home Ruler presented themselves on the hustings. At a previous election the Tory had slipped in owing to the nomination of John Mitchel, which had split the Nationalist vote. The Conservatives conspired to repeat the *coup*. Suddenly, just before the close of nomination day, a certain Nationalist rushed into Mr. Horgan, a solicitor, and handed him a nomination for Parnell. The paper was signed by two priests among other electors. Horgan was puzzled, but his visitor assured him that he had Parnell's sanction, and showed £250 in notes, which he said Parnell had sent down from Dublin that very morning. Parnell was nominated forthwith, to the dismay and disgust of all save the Tory candidate and wirepullers. That evening Horgan received a telegram from Parnell thanking him for the nomination, and promising to travel south at once. Before he arrived an ugly rumour was spread that he was, in fact, a Tory nominee, and when Horgan met him at two o'clock in the morning on the railway platform Parnell's first inquiry was how he had come to be nominated. Horgan surprised Parnell in turn by narrating his end of the story. An immediate investigation was made. Under a threat of public denunciation by Parnell, Horgan's visitor disclosed that the Tories had given him the money to run an "extreme" candidate, so as to split the Whig and Nationalist vote. £50 had been given him for the sheriff's fees, and £200 remained as commission for procuring a candidate. Parnell took the fellow in hand, made him disgorge the cash, and fought the election at the expense of his opponents. The contest was short and sharp. Parnell and Daly were elected for the City on April 14; Mr. Andrew Kettle, his nominee for the County, barely failed. The result was, indeed, remarkable, when it is remembered that Parnell had to overcome the opposition of four bishops and nearly all the local priests.

Ten days of fevered electoral strife gave the country a fine opportunity of seeing how superb a fighter Parnell really was. He did not spare himself, and he infused some of his splendid energy into his followers. With his limited funds, and the Land League money was not available for electoral purposes, he could only attack selected seats, yet the result was a great personal and national triumph, despite the fact that some obviously unreliable persons had to be allowed to slip back to the House of Commons. In a sense, indeed, Parnell had as great a personal triumph in Ireland as Gladstone had in Great

Britain, and the Irishman laboured under the important disadvantage of having but one notable newspaper on his side—*The Nation*, of Dublin; but after all, there is nothing more impotent than the press, unless it takes care that its discretion is not the sum total of its valour.

Statisticians will find something to marvel at in the fact that Morley, T. P. O'Connor and Mr. Barry O'Brien give each a different set of figures for the Irish results. Morley's list, compiled by the Liberal Whips, gives 65 Nationalists—35 followers of Parnell, 26 moderate Home Rulers, about which the Liberal Whips were probably the best judges, and 4 dubious. T. P. O'Connor states 68 Home Rulers were returned; Mr. Barry O'Brien sets them down at 60. Parnell could in fact count upon at least 23 members. That was the foundation of his great party—modest enough numerically, but it included a wide variety of first-rate political talents, and was unquestionably the most efficient and patriotic band Ireland had ever sent to voice the National cause in the House of Commons. Parnell himself was elected for three seats, and decided to hold the representation of Cork City.

The British elections had resulted in the return of 347 Liberals and 240 Conservatives. The Irish in Great Britain had voted solidly against the Tories. It was plain that Gladstone would have to resume his leadership of the victors. He had begun the campaign against the Disraeli Administration. He had given it its death blows. The whole contest was swayed from Midlothian. There was no other man who could claim at the moment to speak for the British electorate with equal authority. The Queen, however, did not like him. She sent for Hartington, and tried hard to secure him as her first Minister of State. The story of the negotiations afford some intensely interesting glimpses into such great episodes of government. Her Majesty failed. The facts were too powerful for Hartington. It must have been a keen disappointment for him when he felt compelled to advise his Sovereign, evidently against her strong desire, that Gladstone alone could form a stable government. He did his part, however, with a certain lumbering grace in keeping with his character, and agreed to serve under the old Ajax of Hawarden. Six years later he had his revenge.

It must have been perfectly evident to Parnell that the hour had struck for his assumption of the full leadership of the Irish Nation. That he was, in fact, the leader none but the most futile could doubt, but while another man presided over and spoke for the Irish members in Parliament he could not be said to have all the reins in his hands. It has been

said that his election to the chair was none of his own doing ; that others pressed the advisability of it upon him. There is a coyness that invites and compels. Parnell may not, perhaps, have absolutely decided that it was safe at the moment to seek the position. Some of his friends could not be present at the meeting which was to settle the matter. He could not possibly be sure of a majority, if all the Irish members attended. A defeat at this juncture would certainly not improve his prestige. He was not a man to court a rebuff uselessly. Yet it surely was a case of now or never. Another chance of increasing his Parliamentary following to any appreciable degree was probably five or six years away. It was almost essential that he should know exactly how he stood now within the Home Rule Party. Under all the circumstances of the case it seems absurd to believe that Parnell would have allowed the occasion to pass without trying conclusions with Mr. Shaw. His private secretary, Mr. Tim Healy, busied himself vehemently to have him elected, and it is scarcely allowable to suppose that he would have done so without knowing Parnell's wishes.

At any rate, on April 26 the Parliamentary representatives met in the City Hall, Dublin, to elect a Chairman. It was seen that there was no sort of agreement to be had then, and an adjournment till May 17 was proposed and carried. The night before the second meeting a conference of some of the newly elected members and a few prominent Nationalists was held at the Imperial Hotel, and there and then the Parnellites finally resolved to try their fortune next day. Parnell was away at an election, and it was only when he was walking from Morrison's Hotel to the City Hall that he was told of this resolve. Arrived at the rendezvous, he displayed a list of members before a friend, and it is a circumstance that illuminates in the strangest way the political conditions of the time that neither Parnell nor his friend could assign the probable predilections of several of those upon it. The result was very doubtful. So much so that T. P. O'Connor states Parnell suggested Mr. Justin McCarthy as a compromise between Shaw and himself. The meeting was soon in full swing, and all such suggestions were quickly swamped in the heated tide of partisanship. Maurice Brooks and Richard Power proposed Shaw ; The O'Gorman Mahon and Bigger proposed Parnell. The climax has been described by T. P. O'Connor with great dramatic power : " So the conflicting emotions were written on the faces of the men as they voted ; the strivings in the dark depths of their souls found involuntary echoes in the weak, thin, and quiet voice in

which they uttered the words Shaw or Parnell. Many men turned pale; few spoke much above a whisper. There was one man whom I saw then for the first time, and whose demeanour particularly attracted my attention. Slightly overdressed, laughing, with the indescribable air of the man whom life had made somewhat cynical, he was in sharp contrast with the rugged, plainly-dressed, serious figures around him. If appearances were not deceptive, he bore the unmistakable marks of the Whig. Nobody knew him, except, perhaps, his colleague, The O'Gorman Mahon. Mr. Parnell seemed never to have seen him before. When the time came for his vote his face grew pale; and, to everybody's surprise, his voice was for Parnell. It was Captain O'Shea. It was not the decisive, but it was not an unnecessary vote. The numbers were—for Parnell, 23; for Shaw, 18. The late Edmund Dwyer Gray was then Lord Mayor of Dublin, and as such sat in the civic chair until the election was decided. If I remember rightly, there was a brief adjournment after the election. When we returned, Mr. Gray had left the chair. With some hesitation, very slowly, and with a certain deprecatory look on his face, Parnell went into the chair. There was, perhaps, a slight glitter in his eye, but the general expression was undoubtedly that of shyness. And so Parnell presided for the first time as leader over the Irish Party."

It is true it was a shaky election. Only 41 members had voted. There were over 20 unaccounted for. His majority was but five. Amongst those who voted against him was Mr. Gray, the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*. But all genuine Nationalists approved the result. It was irrevocable and inevitable, and from it flowed glory, triumph and sorrow for Ireland.

CHAPTER XXV.

DAVITT RETURNS TO AMERICA.

EVEN if Davitt had been eligible for membership of Parliament there is small likelihood that he would have allowed his name to be put forward at this memorable election. Whether by this time he had advanced sufficiently in political sanity to take the view regarding membership of the House which he held towards the close of his career it is unnecessary to inquire. He was indeed travelling fast away from dream-land, though not always towards practical politics; still, he

was sensible enough to recognise, even if he were not disabled by law, that to enter the British Legislature in 1880 would have been too startling a metamorphosis to carry conviction to those upon whom he depended mainly to supply backbone to the new movement. On the land question he had now concentrated his whole mind. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that he had done the most epoch-making feat in the history of modern Ireland, for it was he, not Parnell, who had hitched the land on to Home Rule; had, in fact, secured for it precedence of the great national demand. Despite superficial developments, there was no recession thereafter from that position. We have already partly examined the wisdom of this procedure. If it were as unwise, as it undoubtedly was wise, there would have been sufficient justification for the precipitancy in the acute sufferings of the people and the almost brutal selfishness of most of the landlords. A most remarkable instance of the extraordinary callousness of these short-sighted tyrants was afforded by Lord Clanricarde in the last month of 1879. A letter of his to the *Freeman's Journal* is so suggestive of the hopelessness to which many of the peasantry had been doomed by their masters, and such an unique piece of biographical revelation, that I venture to transfer it to these pages. It ran thus:—"London, 7th December. Sir—I have been informed that within the last few days (the 2nd December) you have published in the *Freeman's Journal* a letter, dated Loughrea, November 29, and signed 'J. Carroll.' He attempts in it (with indifferent success) the easy talk of drawing a comparison, to my disadvantage, between my conduct and that of the late Lord Clanricarde towards the people on my Irish property. It is perfectly true my father devoted many years of his life to the interests of those on his property in Galway, but he was so deeply wounded by their ingratitude, that in one of his last letters to me he not only strongly expressed his bitter mortification and disappointment at their conduct, but even begged I would remember it against them—the only instance of vindictiveness on his part I can remember. I further gathered his opinion, in which I share, to have been that the people in question are incapable of gratitude and impossible to satisfy. It is not reasonable to expect that I, discouraged by the 'evil for good' my father met with from his tenants, should care to tread in his footsteps. Your obedient servant.—Clanricarde." It appears that the deadly offence of the tenants was that after permitting it to pass into a proverb, that Clanricarde, if he liked, could return his grey horse to Parliament,

unhappily for themselves, at last broke the spell of his political potency, and refused to vote for one of his nominees. His son proved only too dutiful to the prompting of the sire. Years of misery and horrid strife afflicted the estates of the noble Marquess, and it was only thirty-seven years after this shameless letter was penned, and after Parliament had to intervene specially to end the plague spot of the west, that the property was acquired by compulsion, and justice done to his long-suffering tenantry.

During the elections Davitt was singled out by Parnell for one bit of work over which the pair might easily have come into acute disagreement. The turbulent meeting at Ennis-corthy produced a bad impression, which Parnell desired to remove with all convenient speed. He considered Davitt just the man for the purpose, and accordingly despatched him to the historic town at the foot of Vinegar Hill to hold another meeting, and restore the prestige of everybody concerned. Davitt went to Wexford, prospected the situation, discovered that feeling ran too high to be allayed, and that a second meeting would for certain be attended with riot and bloodshed. He decided that the game was not worth the candle. Parnell, according to Davitt, put the worst possible construction upon his failure to organise the counterblast, attributing his action to a secret intrigue with the extremists. But Davitt had in reality seen clearly enough that, in spite of the vehement opposition, the Parnellite candidates were bound to win, and this consolatory result ensuing all other estrangement was averted for the nonce.

The elections over, a conference on future policy was held in Dublin. Parnell took a strangely moderate view of the possibilities of the Parliamentary situation. No doubt, the Liberals held a clear majority, but it was not so overawingly large as to frighten down the Irish demand to Butt's Bill for fixity of tenure. The probability is that at this period Parnell attached little importance to "programmes," relying mainly on the advantages to be seized out of the ever-varying exigencies of the political situation. Mr. Justin McCarthy has described him as a man with the genius of a commander-in-chief, and the faculty of seeing readily what was the right thing to do at a given moment. "Others of us," said that acute and experienced political observer, "might be useful in fixing lines of policy in advance. But when a crisis arose, when something had to be done on the instant which might have a serious effect on the future, we were no good. We were paralysed. Parnell made up his mind in an instant, and did the thing without doubting or flinching."

At all events, he now acquiesced in a platform embodying land purchase aided by State credit. Twenty years' purchase was the price suggested, and Davitt objected that this was too high. He accordingly refused to append his name to the programme, though he did not withdraw his help from the construction of the proposals to be carried to Westminster by the members. Before that, however, the programme had to be placed before the people, and for that purpose a public meeting was held on the last day of April in that Mecca of Irish Nationalism, the Rotunda of Dublin. The Home Rule triumph at the polls was to be celebrated at the same time. Some of the most recalcitrant of the Fenians again intervened. Davitt endeavoured to obtain a hearing for the spokesman of the dissensionists, but a sharp scuffle took place, he was roughly mauled, and the extremists had to be ejected before the meeting could proceed. It was the last occasion during the Parnell movement upon which the Fenians made themselves nasty.

Davitt had now really serious business to attend to. Dillon had remained in America, but the hasty exit of Parnell had interrupted the organisation of the Land League across the Atlantic. Thither he sailed in May, 1880. Almost immediately he had to fight a desperate battle for the very life of the new movement. America was, indeed, the only hope of financing the Land League adequately, and now he had to go through the ordeal of witnessing a vote—for or against—which might easily have the effect of killing the League or rendering it invincible. At a Conference in Trenor Hall, New York, he was faced by two influential Fenians—one American and the other from England—in a debate on the whole policy of the new departure. The Fenian spokesmen were perfectly frank and honest. They held that the new movement was a lie; that it was a mere pretence of loyalty, and depended on a dishonest and unholy alliance.

Davitt's reply was as frank, and more commonsense. He said the Fenians had lost because of their exclusiveness; that the land question was urgent; that the farmers would help those who helped them at this grave crisis. That was the clue to all the politics of Ireland. No movement could succeed in Ireland from which the farming class held aloof.

Davitt scored in the debate and won on the vote. The League never looked back from that hour. He swept through the United States. * All through New England he carried his propaganda, and away to the shores of the Great Lakes, into the central prairies, off to the verge of the Pacific. His argument was simple in the exereime, and made an irresistible

appeal to exiles who had been driven from Ireland by the evictors. Smash landlordism and you overthrow English rule in Ireland—that was his case in a nutshell. Nor did he hesitate to reason with the party of physical force. To them he declaimed a few incontrovertible and unpleasant facts. Four times in the century they had tried the efficacy of physical force, and four times, instead of harming England, they had only hurt themselves. It was surely time to select some other means of attack. Strike against rent, bring down the garrison in Ireland, overthrow Irish landlordism—that was indeed a feasible way of preparing for independence.

Arrangements concluded for the spread of the League throughout the North American Continent and for the pouring of funds into Ireland, Davitt prepared to rush home on hearing that the Government were again about to attack the leaders. He could not be absent from Ireland when such risks were impending. He finished his visit at a monster farewell reception in the Cooper Union, New York, when he spoke with impressive effect a clever summary of the case for the Irish peasantry.

“American critics,” he said, “are justified in asking us what is this system we want to abolish? I will try and answer. Ireland contains 20,000,000 acres of land. That land is claimed in the following proportions by that class known as Irish landlords:—452 landlords claim as their absolute property over 5,000 acres of land each; 135 hold over 10,000 acres each; 90 of these individuals claim over 20,000 acres each; 14 more fortunate ones claim over 50,000 acres each; three Irish landlords hold as their absolute property land in Ireland to the extent of 100,000 acres; and one, Lord Lansdowne, is the holder of an estate of 170,000 acres; 292 landlords own 650,000 acres of Irish land; 744 hold over 9,500,000 acres, or nearly one-half of the whole of Ireland. Now, it is a rational question, it is a fair question to ask, how they became possessed of that land. Who gave it to them? What service did they render to Ireland or the Irish people that that land should be conferred upon them? I am merely quoting history when I say that this property was stolen from the Irish people by the ancestors of these landlords. The vast majority of Irish landlords hold their estates through the confiscation of centuries ago; and because robbers succeeded 300 years ago, therefore the descendants of these successful robbers must hold the whole of the land of Ireland, thus divorcing the people from the soil; because I find here that 5,000,000 of the Irish people do not own one single acre between them. Now, I ask any candid American critic to

compare this land monopoly in Ireland with land administration in any other country in the world. I ask them to come back and see how the ancestors of these men became possessed of the land, and then why we should tolerate this system; why we should allow this property to weigh down the neck of Ireland, and keep the people impoverished and in misery generation after generation. Suppose this case was American; suppose there was such a class in this country as claims the whole of the soil—that would evict as many people as it liked—do you mean to say that the manly spirit that created this Government would tolerate such a system or such a class? That they would not declare the same war against it that they did against slavery in the South? But this is not all that was done with the land of Ireland. It was stolen from the people. You have even heard of certain corporations in England that own vast possessions in the North of Ireland. The Salters of London own 19,000 acres of land in Ireland. You might ask what these Salters have done for Ireland. In the reign of King James I., I think, there was one attempt made to plant Ulster. In those days it was a crime to be a Catholic. In order to get money to defray the expenses of sending troops to Ireland, the land that had not yet been taken from the Irish people in the North was sold to corporations in London for five or six shillings an acre; and ever since these vast estates have been claimed by the English corporations as follows:—The Skinners own 24,000 acres; the Fishmongers, 20,000; the Ironmongers, 12,000; the Grocers, 10,000, &c. This is how the land of Ireland was stolen from the people, and how it is held to-day by corporations. These are palpable facts. Now, is it any wonder that Ireland, passing through another landlord-created famine, should spring to her feet and assert that these famines must be stopped, and that this humiliation must be ended by driving out this damnable system of landlordism, which is the most complete failure of any institution that was ever built up over a subjugated people. All the officials of Ireland are landlords; in fact, everything in the country is in the hands of that system, and yet landlordism is a failure. But the hour has come when its end will be consummated, and I trust Ireland and humanity will be rid of the greatest curse that has ever been known. And now, when Irish landlords are crying out against a few outrages; when they are purchasing coats of mail by the score, and demanding soldiers to protect them, let us ask what they have done towards assassination. Let us put landlordism on one scale and the tenant-farmers on the other, and see who have committed

the most crime. Travel no further back than '47 and '48, when Ireland was afflicted with a landlord-created famine: and I declare here to-night, in the language of John Mitchel, that landlordism and the British Government were guilty of the murder of 250,000 of God's creatures in those years. Had not the Land League sprung into existence 100,000 more murders would have to be put down to the credit of landlordism, to be added to the number already recorded before Almighty God as the work of that institution. These gentlemen cry out that their lives are not safe in Ireland—let them go where their lives will be safe, and all Ireland, looking after them, not with tearful but joyful eyes, will exclaim, 'May the devil go along with them.'"

It was during this visit to America that Davitt was shadowed by Le Caron, the spy. Beach was the real name of this extraordinary agent of the British Secret Service. He had wormed himself into the confidence of the Clan-na-Gael, and for years was regarded as a trustworthy member of the Brotherhood, while all the time he was regularly informing the British authorities of the works and pomps of the trans-Atlantic conspirators. He actually attended Davitt during one of the illnesses which seized him during his arduous campaign; for, in addition to suffering from insomnia, he was twice stricken down with fevers and some minor ailments. Le Caron pulled him through one of them, and doubtless thereby added to the prestige he enjoyed amongst Irish-Americans. For seven years more this remarkable spy managed to pursue his double life unsuspected, and was at last revealed in his true light only when, to the surprise of Davitt, he entered the witness-box at the Commission into *The Times'* charges to give evidence against his former patient.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PANDEMONIUM.

IRELAND very nearly resembled pandemonium in 1880. Gladstone was now Prime Minister; Lord Cowper was Lord Lieutenant; Mr. W. E. Forster was Chief Secretary; Mr. Burke, over whom a horrible fate impended, was Under-Secretary. The imperviousness of statesmen, especially of English statesmen, in regard to Irish affairs, must always be an astonishment to men of ordinary intelligence. We have it on the authority of Lord Cowper himself that the Govern-

ment were not thinking of the land question when he was sent over to Ireland. There is other incontrovertible evidence to similar effect. In other words, what every man, woman and child of the age of reason was thinking about day and night, was completely absent from the minds of the rulers of the country. The root cause of the country's unrest was absolutely ignored by the great luminaries of the English political firmament.

Gladstone, who had just stirred Britain to its depths about spots on the earth which the vast majority of the English people could not have located on the map of the world, fed himself fatuously with the fancy that the Irish question had been settled by his Disestablishment Act and his Land Act of 1870. Such are the blunders of ubiquitous genius and cosmopolitan concern. Mr. John Bright, almost alone of English politicians of the first rank, gave a thought to the vital question which was so soon to bring Ireland to the verge of anarchy.

The Parnellites gave the Ministry no excuse for their neglect. One of them introduced a Bill to stay evictions by enacting that compensation should be awarded in any case of disturbance. The Chief Secretary said he would not vote against the principle of the Bill, but the Government would not support the measure. Instead, they brought forward a Bill of their own—the "Compensation for Disturbance Bill." It was a most moderate measure under the circumstances of the case. With our improved experience of remedial legislation we should be inclined to look upon it as almost the very least that any Government could possibly propose upon the question; that, in fact, they would require no small degree of courage to propose so little. It intended to give compensation to any evicted tenant who would prove that he could not pay his rent; that his inability was due to the bad harvests of the last two or three years, and not to his own fault; that he wished to continue tenant at a reasonable rent, and that the landlord had unreasonably refused such a reasonable rent. Even the wildest Conservative of to-day would smile at the mildness of this remedy. Lord Hartington supported the Bill in a perfectly unanswerable speech. The second reading was carried, but forty nominal Liberals deserted the Government, and then the trouble began. Amendments whittling down the remedial potency of the proposals were brought forward. The Government vacillated, were weak and strong by fits, gave way, compromised, and disgusted the Irish members, who at length walked out of the House in protest. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not prevail,"

was the taunt hurled by Parnell at Forster. The Bill, however, passed the Commons, but only fifty-one peers could be found to vote for it in the hereditary chamber, and it was flung out without ceremony by an overwhelming majority. Then hell broke loose in Ireland.

I am not concerned with the general history of the time, except in so far as it illustrates and illuminates and carries the impress of the characters and personalities of Parnell and Davitt, but a few of the salient facts, though without such biographical import, must be mentioned to thread the narrative together.

How the trouble could have come on the new Ministry as a surprise, how it could have caught them napping, passes our comprehension. Gladstone's immediate predecessor evidently knew what to expect. His election manifesto was not too honest a document, but Disraeli did really apprehend serious difficulties in Ireland. Morley relates that on the day in 1880 when he left his official residence in Downing Street for the last time, he held gloomy converse with a journalist who had called to say good-bye. Austria, Russia, Turkey, were stirred in turn in the cauldron of their fretful reflections, until Beaconsfield looked his friend steadily in the face, groaned the single word "Ireland," and went into the country to finish "Endymion." The Government had allowed the special coercion law to lapse, and now they found themselves baffled by the Lords in their ameliorative schemes.

A most understandable terror arose. The people were in want. The landlords were remorseless. The agrarian organisation had been consolidated. The people felt their power, and for that reason were more than ever enraged against the power of their enemies. The leaders had spoken to them a new speech of deliverance—vehement, audacious, defiant. Parliament appeared to throw back the defiance in their faces. America had sent them a message, the import of which none could mistake. Ford's paper, *The Irish World*, began to circulate over the island. It was a tremendous incitement in itself. The result was inevitable. Outrage increased with eviction. The peasantry were never again going to take bad treatment lying down. Moonlighting grew into a habit; boycotting into a custom; threats were epidemic; landlords, agents and their understrappers were marked men; murder became frequent; arms were stolen from the "Juno," a ship lying in Queenstown Harbour. It was rumoured that a plot had been discovered for the blowing up of Cork Barracks. At the root of the anarchy was the tyranny of the landlord class. During 1879, 6,239 tenants

were evicted, and there were 863 agrarian outrages committed. In 1880, 10,457 people were thrown upon the roadside, and there were 2,590 agrarian outrages. Crime increased almost in exact ratio with the growth of evictions. Think of the vast provocation the peasantry received. At a time of the direst distress thousands of people, young and old, men, women, and children, were made vagrants and vagabonds in their native land because they could not pay impossible rents. The workhouse, the emigrant ship, or the foetid slum of a city—these were the only options. Human nature being as it is, crime seems man's only available answer to such a degradation of his life. We may denounce outrage done under such conditions as forcibly as we can, but until either rank slavery or angelic perfection becomes natural to man the viciousness of his resentment will grow with the injustices of his oppressors. The evictions were often characterised by a brutality which would have maddened a seraph. The ruined victim was expected to maintain an equanimity in proper keeping with the sedate constitution of the realm, and which was unknown under relatively trivial provocation to the people who were infuriated by the spinning jenny and goaded to insurrection by the refusal of the Charter. Tears of burning pathos were brought from John Bright in his young manhood because the churchwardens of Rochdale distrained on a poor parishioner, and with "their ruthless hands" seized his family bible for the church rate. A Connemara tenant was to submit with edifying Christian meekness while he saw his cabin tumbled to the ground or fired, his holding given over to the grazier's bullocks, and his wife and children trudging painfully to the poorhouse or the nearest port for America. Extenuating circumstances never went further in excuse of crime than in Ireland during this tragic year.

It is fully admitted that a more lawless, a more violent organisation than the Land League scarcely ever existed. "If it had not been violent and lawless," says Mr. Barry O'Brien, "it would not have succeeded." The mind of England "was violently drawn from Dulcigno and Thessaly, from Batoum and Erzeroum, from the wild squalor of Macedonia and Armenia," writes Morley, "to squalor not less wild in Connaught and Munster, in Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Kerry." The Government were stupefied by the flood, to use Gladstone's phrase. They poured military and constabulary into rural Ireland. "In Galway they had a policeman for every forty-seven adult males, and a soldier for every ninety-seven. Yet dangerous terrorism was rampant." To

that depth had English statesmanship reduced the country.

It has been said that the situation was all the more serious because the leaders of the people did not condescend to denounce crime and outrage. The remark is futile. The Land League, the whole agrarian agitation, was simply a great and angry and justifiable protest against tyrannical laws and tyrannical administration. Against such laws and such administration oppressed people have no weapons except illegality. All the nations which have shaken bondage from their shoulders have done so by violence and disorder. But it is untrue to say that the leaders, at least the more responsible and authoritative of them, did not denounce outrage. I have quoted a few of the councils of Parnell to the people. It was no part of his business to advise the peasantry to obey laws against which he wished them to wage war. He was not so puerile as to think that this campaign could be conducted according to law. But he discouraged outrage as far as he could, and for the very sensible and weighty reasons which he gave in his speeches. But why labour the point? When the basic feelings of a people are outraged, and the elemental passions goaded by injustice and suffering, good advice is a wretched sedative. And, perhaps, the best commentary on much of the denunciation of the Land League is found in the fact that when, in November, Gladstone explained the state of Ireland to the Queen, he, with a preference only too characteristic of British lawgivers, placed the widespread conspiracy against property before "general insecurity of life."

This was Parnell's first session as leader of the Irish Party in the House. He had taken his seat on the Opposition benches. His following mustered close on forty; Shaw, with his moderates, crossed over to the Government side. Parnell had to fight them as well as the Liberals. He was heard in many of the debates, and his advance to the front rank of Parliamentary personages was apparent to everyone who chanced to be in the House when he rose to speak. On the thorny and heated question of the admission of the atheist Bradlaugh, he intervened because, as he said, he was disgusted with the bigoted sentiments he had heard in the debates. He declared that Bradlaugh's theories were revolting, but on the question of his admission to the Commons he, as well as Gladstone, supported him.

There were a few rays of hope. For one thing, the Government promised a Land Bill in the next session, and sent out a Commission to take evidence prior to its construction. For another thing, there were some remarkable admissions from

the Ministerial Benches. Gladstone said that under the circumstances prevalent in Ireland a sentence of eviction was equivalent to a sentence of death; and Forster declared that if the landlords made use of their powers so as to force the Government to support them in the exercise of injustice, the Government would accompany any request for special powers with a Bill which would prevent them from being obliged to support injustice. He went further. He threatened plainly to resign rather than be the instrument of landlord injustice and tyranny. But these fine intentions did not survive the hectoring of the Tory Opposition.

Parnell crossed to Ireland when Parliament rose. The country was in a ferment. The leader has been described as riding upon the storm. It is a conventional description, and not without truth. But he did far more than harness the winds to his chariot. He grasped the tempest, used it for his purposes, and out of a maelstrom shaped an epoch.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHAPING AN EPOCH.

PARNELL shaped the epoch with the speeches he delivered during the recess of 1880. He spoke at Ennis, New Ross, Kilkenny, Cork, Longford, Galway, Tipperary, Limerick, Athlone, Dublin, and elsewhere. No public utterances have so influenced the course of Irish events. They dictated a policy to the people, which the people seized and practised with avidity. They represent Parnell at the zenith of his powers. Reading them alone, no one could imagine the speaker was the strange shy stammerer of a few years before. They contain all the evidence of high declamatory gifts. They are eloquence of a restrained, calculating, unembellished kind, but warm with the glow of a powerful, determined, and courageous personality. They are full of those phrases which are greedily digested by a people and incorporated in a national speech. They are short, finely pointed, couched in the simplest language, and they express, with almost terrifying force, thoughts that were burning in his listeners' minds and craving madly for expression. It was a sheer delight to the populace to find that when they were expressed they looked thus superb and indomitable and so well able to stand the full light of day. Parnell has been spoken of as if he were no orator, and never reached eminence as a public speaker. Oratory is a vexed question. The

speeches that live through the ages, because of the conjunction within them of sublime thought, profound purpose, and majesty of phrase, can be numbered on the fingers of both hands. Candour will certainly admit that some of the notable specimens handed down to us are a little hard to admire. Immortality of this kind is occasionally an accident. Besides, fashions in oratory change. But if the test be the domination of a vast crisis by speech, the radiation of overmastering personality through the rhetoric, the crystallisation of the facts and feelings, the emotions and necessities, the sentiments and yearnings of a people and a period in an utterance, then some of the speeches of Parnell rank in the very first flight of political oratory. In the aspect of art, their extraordinary effect on those who heard and read them is an all-sufficient vindication.

At Ennis, where he opened the campaign in the middle of September, he dealt with the Commission preparatory to the promised Land Bill. "What will be said," he asked, "if the tenant-farmers come before this Commission in any large numbers? It will be said that you have accepted the Commission; it will be said that you will be bound by its report; and if there is very much evidence given, it will form a very good excuse for the Government and for the English party to put off legislation on the land question next session, until they have time to read the evidence and consider its bearings and effect. My opinion, then, decidedly is this: whatever harm you do to your cause by going before this Commission, you certainly will be able to do no good. Depend upon it, that the measure of the Land Bill of next session will be the measure of your activity and energy this winter; it will be the measure of your determination not to pay unjust rents; it will be the measure of your determination to keep a firm grip of your homesteads; it will be the measure of your determination not to bid for farms from which others have been evicted, and to use the strong force of public opinion to deter any unjust man amongst yourselves—and there are many such—from bidding for such farms. If you refuse to pay unjust rents, if you refuse to take farms from which others have been evicted, the land question must be settled, and settled in a way that will be satisfactory to you. It depends, therefore, upon yourselves, and not upon any Commission or any Government. When you have made the question ripe for settlement, then, and not till then, will it be settled. Now, what are you to do to a tenant who bids for a farm from which another man has been evicted? (Several Voices—'Shoot him.') I think I heard somebody say, 'Shoot him.'

I wish to point out to you a very much better way—a more Christian and charitable way, which will give the lost man an opportunity of repenting. When a man takes a farm from which another has been unjustly evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him; you must show him in the streets of the town; you must show him in the shop; you must show him in the fair-green and in the market-place, and even in the place of worship, by leaving him alone; by putting him into a moral Coventry; by isolating him from the rest of his country, as if he were the leper of old—you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed; and you may depend upon it, that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to shame, as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men and to transgress your unwritten code of laws.” If that be not a dramatic climax of Attic simplicity and power, it is surely as near an approach to that standard as modern oratory has dared.

In these speeches he made it plain that he himself had no model plans to offer to the Government. What he insisted upon was that a solution should be found that would really solve the trouble. He wished that the struggle should be short, sharp and decisive—these were his words—so that the agitation would not be perpetuated at intervals. A permanent settlement. That was the aim. The tenants had a right to look forward to the time when rents would cease. He did not desire antagonism between classes, and that was just what the continuance of the land war would entail.

At Galway he dragged back the minds of his fellow-countrymen to the greater and deeper question, which he was determined should not be completely overshadowed by the agrarian movement. “I wish to see the tenant-farmers prosperous,” he exclaimed; “but, large and important as is the class of tenant-farmers, constituting as they do, with their wives and families, the majority of the people of this country, I would not have taken off my coat and gone to this work if I had not known that we were laying the foundation in this movement for the regeneration of our legislative independence. Push on, then, towards the goal; extend your organisation, and let every tenant-farmer while he keeps a grip on his holding recognise also the great truth that he is serving his country and the people at large, and helping to break down English misrule in Ireland.” It was this simple, yet tantalising, duality of method which puzzled English politicians like Forster, and accounted for the way they misconstrued his words, misunderstood his actions, and misinterpreted his objects. “When I was in

Ireland," Lord Cowper confessed in after years, "we considered Mr. Parnell the centre of the whole movement. We thought him the chief, if not the only danger; we feared him because he had united all the elements of discontent; because we never knew what he would be up to, and we felt that he would stop at nothing. I certainly thought that his aim was separation. I thought that he used agrarian discontent for separatist purposes. There was very little said about Home Rule at that time. It was all agrarianism, with separation in the background, and Parnell was the centre of everything." The Viceroy thought Parnell was very English. "He had neither the virtues nor the vices of an Irishman. His very passion was English, his coolness was English, his reserve was English." Yet to these English he was a complete enigma, while the Irish grasped his meaning thoroughly, and there was perfect attunement between the people and their young leader.

The campaign went on through September and October and November. In addition to the large meetings which Parnell addressed, there were others in various counties quite as formidable and vehement. The harvest was fairly good, but was "held." The tenants had finally made up their minds that they would only pay the rent they could afford. Outrage was rife; evictions were wholesale; some startling murders were committed. The Government now fully realised the gravity of the situation. Rumours of strong action crept abroad. The Ministry at last conceived the master-stroke of a grand State trial of Parnell and the other leaders, but before that delightful futility is described a few interesting incidents may be chronicled.

Affairs are never so serious in Ireland as to exclude the features of comedy. When Parnell stepped out of the train the Saturday night, in November, he arrived in Longford, nobody on the platform recognised him. Instead of the customary scene of wild enthusiasm, he was faced by a silent, disappointed crowd. Let one of the reporters explain. "After a difficulty had been got over," he wrote, "caused by a complete change in Mr. Parnell's appearance, which created a doubt in many as to his identity, loud cheers were raised, which were continued as the members drove from the station to the hotel. Mr. Parnell, since he was last seen in public, has entirely denuded himself of his hirsute appendages, with the exception of a narrow strip stretching down each jaw and under the chin. The honourable gentleman's appearance is so changed that even his most intimate friends meeting him casually in the street would not recognise him."

Even a more amusing episode, though it had a serious side to it, was the Boycott Expedition. Captain Boycott, Lord Erne's agent, refused to accept the rent the tenants offered. The process-server was hunted when he came to serve the ejectments. Then the gallant Captain was put into Parnell's "moral Coventry." His servants were induced to leave him; the shopkeepers were warned not to sell to him; and he was completely isolated. His crops were unsaved, and winter was coming on. Some of the Orange leaders in Ulster conceived the idea of invading Mayo—the Captain's house was at the edge of Lough Mask—with a body of Orangemen to save the crops. Captain Somerset Maxwell got together some of the labourers on Lord Farnham's property, and a body of some seventy Orange stalwarts from Cavan and Monaghan prepared for the invasion. But difficulties arose: the Government refused to protect the train in which they proposed to travel from the North, and for a time the expedition was held up. It was a perilous proceeding. The peasants of the West were now well armed, and prepared to resent any Orange demonstrations in Mayo.

At length hundreds of police were drafted to the Captain's neighbourhood. Infantry and cavalry and the Army Service Corps with a couple of field-pieces were hurried from Dublin. Nothing like it had ever been seen even in Ireland. When the soldiers arrived in Mayo fun, not war, began. They had intended to pitch a camp the night of their arrival, but forgot to bring tent-pegs with them, with the result that they had to pass the night in a downpour of rain. Seventy Orangemen then arrived. Their march to Lough Mask was exactly like a procession of prisoners of war from a battlefield. They walked two abreast between lines of soldiers and police, and a brilliant escort of cavalry was a further guarantee of their security. But except for some passing banter they were not in any way molested. Arrived at Boycott's, they experienced none of the gushing welcome they had conjured up in their expectations. The Captain, indeed, seems to have regarded his rescuers as something of a nuisance. It was said that he displayed some meanness with regard to their remuneration. It was also said that the soldiers, irritated by the horrible inclemency of the weather and the inadequacy of the provisions for their comfort, had become restive. One of them, at all events, assaulted a servant at Boycott's. It was also said that there was not a dry shirt in the whole army of occupation. Then the excitement was switched on to a project of marching Lord Erne's tenantry from Mayo to Fermanagh by way of tit-for-tat, but the League forbade the

counter-invasion, and told the tenants to "stay at home, and let the landlord come and look for his rent." Finally, the crops were saved, and the Captain and his Orange incubus, together with the military expedition, vanished. The only result was the addition of a word to the English language. Many a fierce agitation has done less for humanity.

An incident of Parnell's visit to Cork is also worth mentioning. The leader left the train at Blarney with the intention of driving by road to the southern city. A procession of cars and wagonettes was formed, and two gentlemen who had been conspicuous in censuring the gun-stealing from the "Juno" seated themselves in the carriage with Parnell. Instantly a band of youths armed with revolvers surrounded the vehicle, and while expressing the utmost goodwill towards Parnell, refused to allow the obnoxious parties to drive with him into the city. The pair tried to ascend wagonette and car in turn, but again the armed youths compelled them to descend, demanding that they should walk the whole way to Cork. It was, of course, a piece of despicable bullying, but it serves to show the temper of the times. After much parley, the two offenders were allowed to have seats on a car. Mr. T. P. O'Connor has stated that there was "a project to kidnap Parnell himself and take him off to Mallow, by way of breaking his chance of making a constitutional agitation." But Cork is a city of melodramatic gossip.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DAVITT HOME AGAIN.

WHEN Gladstone reported to the Queen that the Irish leaders had failed to denounce crime, he was guilty of carelessness at the least. Anyone who contemplates his multitudinous and complex concerns will, indeed, marvel that that unique man ever managed to be wholly accurate on any single subject. That he should sometimes resort to misleading generalities was inevitable. In the very month when the Premier made this statement to his Sovereign, Michael Davitt was doing little else than actually denouncing crime. He landed at Queenstown on Saturday, November 20, 1880. The very first thing he did on reaching Cork was to denounce crime. "Nothing tends to injure our cause with the American people so much," he said, "as the occasional acts of violence which injustice prompts some to commit in parts of the country."

He proceeded to emphasise that point. To shoot half-a-dozen landlords with their agents thrown in was to create condemnation of their movement at the other side of the Atlantic. "Let the world see," he went on, "that we have higher game in sight and a nobler object in view than stooping to war on any miserable individual while the system that makes him the instrument of tyranny still stands upon our shores, and frowns upon the happiness and prosperity of our nation." He at once travelled up to Dublin, and struck exactly the same note at a meeting of the chief branch of the Land League. "In saying a word about the acts of violence which have taken place during my absence in America," he said, "I should venture to hope that I will not be credited with any other motive in condemning such unnecessary acts than with a desire to see no impediment thrown across the path of our movement in its progress towards the emancipation of the soil of Ireland from landlordism, and the consequent freedom of our agricultural classes from the misery and poverty in which it condemns them to exist." No risk of unpopularity or adverse criticism, he added, would prevent him from raising his voice in emphatic condemnation of any and every act which might strengthen the hands of the landlords against the Land League and alienate the moral support of public opinion throughout the world. No individual should place his personal wrongs or grievances above those of his people and country. "Landlord shooting, to say the least, is unnecessary, except as a means for prolonging the system which alone is responsible for the acts of its twin victims—tenants driven to despair and revenge, and landlord or agent shot or disabled." Then he cited the example of how the people at Lough Mask had dealt with Captain Boycott. What more, it may be asked, did Mr. Gladstone require of the leaders?

As I have said, Davitt accelerated his return when he heard that the Government were likely to strike at the leaders of the Land League. It must have been fully present to his mind that he was little likely to be left out of the reckoning, and the dreadful risk of having to complete his long term of penal servitude, Davitt, though not one to take a light-hearted view of that painful prospect, was ready to accept without hesitation. But it cannot be too strongly emphasised that he was most of all concerned to check the orgy of outrage that seemed to be developing throughout the country. He recognised clearly that outrage played into the hands of the enemy; that it would blunt the sympathy of America; that it would complicate the issues which he desired to keep few and simple.

To American sympathy he looked, especially on behalf of an enterprise which he fondled almost to the end of his career. He desired to promote a revival of Irish industries, and when he planted his organisation in America he called it the National Land and Industries League. It is an example of that pliancy of thought and versatility of sympathy which differentiated him so strangely and so strongly from Parnell. The politician pure and simple would never have thought of such an addendum to the agrarian movement, but it is a faculty of the idealist to live at least as much in the future as in the present, and Davitt never neglected for long to scan the horizon. His over-eager mind peered constantly into to-morrow. He was nearly always before his time, and, after all, that is to be almost impracticable.

He also brought with him from the United States the idea of the Ladies' Land League: it was originally founded in America by Miss Fanny Parnell, the most fiery and emotional member of her family. She was a writer of skill and power, and her verse rang with the true rebel ring. During her brother's American tour she had written an article, commissioned from him by the editor of a magazine, and so excellently did she do the task that her brother was positively frightened. "They'll all know it isn't mine," he said; "it's much too good." In thrilling verse she told the Irish peasants to hold the harvest.

"Now, are you men, or are you kine, ye tillers of the soil?
Would you be free, or evermore the rich man's cattle toil?
The shadow on the dial hangs, that points the fatal hour—
Now, hold your own! or branded slaves, for ever cringe and
cower.

Oh, by the God who made us all—the seignor and the serf,
Rise up! and swear this day to hold your own green Irish turf;
Rise up! and plant your feet as men where now you crawl as
slaves,
And make your harvest fields your camps, or make of them
your graves.

But your own hands upraised to guard shall draw the answer
down,
And bold and stern the deed must be that oath and prayer
shall crown;
God only fights for them who fight—now hush that useless
moan,
And set your faces as a flint, and swear to Hold Your Own!"

It is such poems as this that justify Fletcher of Saltoun. At this juncture she advised that the women of Ireland should lend a hand to their men folk in the great struggle for the land. Miss Anna Parnell, another sister of the leader, warmly espoused the notion, but Parnell himself viewed it with unconcealed misgiving. Davitt saw in the plan a new difficulty for the Government, and now, when it was certain a deliberate attempt would be made to put the spokesmen of the League in jail, it was vitally necessary to fill their places some way or another. He thought the Ladies' Land League just the kind of organisation that would disconcert the authorities. At any rate, the authorities, if the worst befell, would have to carry the odium of packing the women as well as the men into prison. It is doubtful if Davitt would have had his way from Parnell but that the indictment of the leader and his comrades was announced, and an early date fixed for the trial. There was no time to spare for anything but decisions, and the new organisation was sanctioned. It is, however, interesting to recall that on November 18, even before Davitt's arrival home, a brief paragraph in the newspapers stated that the Ladies' Land League was about to be formed, and that the first branches would operate in Bohola, Strade, and Balla—that is, in the region where the parent body itself first saw the light of day.

For the remainder of the year Davitt pursued his anti-outrage campaign. He went through the island exhorting the people to keep their agitation unsullied. He pointed out the futility of crime. He exerted himself day after day to inculcate the newer method of ostracism as against the old plan of striking at limb and life. Parnell held that the responsibility of crime lay with the alien government and the landlords, and he was right. At the same time Davitt perceived that it was dangerous, if not indeed impossible, to leave the matter there calmly and unconcernedly. Ireland had not yet gained the ear of the world, as she did later. Her enemies, almost alone, still disseminated the news, and it was useless to talk about the roots of the evil if the evil was certain to do universal injury to the cause, and could be stopped by the leaders. Parnell was won over to Davitt's opinions; a circular was drafted and sent broadcast, warning the branches of the League against outrages, particularly those perpetrated against dumb animals. This circular was the work of Michael Davitt, and it was one of the acts in all his admirable career of which he had most reason to feel proud. It was now close on Christmas, and the Government struck the first great blow at the very head of the young giant.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A TRAGEDY OPENS.

PARNELL came to political maturity with startling rapidity. He may be said to have blossomed a little late, but to have burst almost suddenly into full bloom. He was seen at the height of his powers in 1880, but the year which revealed him in his plenitude saw the beginning of his downfall. That catastrophe gathered about his head for a whole decade before breaking and killing him. There are few tragedies in history more sorrowful and complete. It makes the task of the biographer sad, and almost pitiful. When Mr. Barry O'Brien wrote his splendid life of Parnell, twenty years ago, he excused himself, very properly, from entering into this harrowing episode. "Mrs. Charles Stewart Parnell and her children are still alive," he wrote; "I must consider her and them; I shall not dwell on a subject full of sorrow and pain." The woman has since broken silence, alas! With her son's consent, she has spoken her secrets to the world. The story has been thrust upon the historian, and no longer dare he shirk his duty.

The O'Gorman Mahon, a frivolous old filibuster, and Captain William Henry O'Shea, son of a Henry O'Shea, of Dublin, were returned for County Clare at the General Election of 1880. O'Shea was a Catholic, educated at Ascot and Trinity College, Dublin. He joined the 18th Hussars as a cornet in 1858, and retired as captain in 1862. He was now fifty years of age. I have quoted T. P. O'Connor's description of him as he appeared at the meeting of the Irish members when Parnell was elected to the chair. It is said that he made a very similar impression on Parnell when he first figured on the hustings in Clare. "I was right," such were Parnell's words, "when I said in '80, as Willie got up on that platform at Ennis, dressed to kill, that he was just the man we did not want in the party." I have no doubt Parnell used these words, but I have been unable to trace him to Clare during the General Election, except on one occasion, when he went to Ennis to support Mr. Lysaght Finegan, and was excused by Finegan from making a long speech because of his bad health that day. The reporter describes him as looking fatigued and delicate, and he only spoke a few words to the meeting. It is possible that during this flying visit he did see O'Shea on some platform, though the Captain's name does not figure in the report, and the county

election is not even mentioned. A branch of O'Shea's family had settled in Spain, and there he had for a time managed a bank and dabbled in mining. He was an over-dressed, impecunious man. His photograph is that of a good-looking dandy, not striking, except for his good looks. In January, 1867, he had married Katherine Wood, a comely woman, the seventh child and youngest daughter of the Rev. Sir John Page Wood, second baronet, of Rivenhall Place, Essex. The first baronet was Alderman Sir Matthew Wood. Sir John's third son, Evelyn Wood, won the Victoria Cross, and became a Field Marshal in the British Army, after a career of honour and distinction. O'Shea's wife was a few years his junior.

The couple had been drifting apart. The wife puts it frankly enough. For a considerable time "we had begun to jar on each other, and Willie left me a great deal alone." Some of her relatives made cruel and suggestive jests on the topic, jests that seemed to indicate that they were aware of laxity in his conduct not consistent with the honour of his home. At any rate, husband and wife saw each other seldom. O'Shea had kept a racing stable. It failed. Their finances were in a rickety condition. His wife's relatives helped, but her own statement is: "we led very insecure lives." Sometimes even her old nurse pressed her savings upon her mistress, saying, "The Captain must want a little change, dearie, going about as he does." At last an aunt with whom Mrs. O'Shea was a favourite gave her a house near her own at Eltham, and settled an income on her on condition that the niece should be her daily companion. In 1880 Mrs. O'Shea was living in seclusion at Eltham, her only occupation being to keep loneliness from her aged aunt and to read to the old lady, who affected a taste for literature, and was the patron of so famous a man as George Meredith.

We do not know what put it into the mind of the impecunious Captain to stand for Clare. O'Gorman Mahon's political partnership with him does not say much for the perspicacity of the veteran, but in truth that same veteran, picturesque and witty as he was, had few of the really solid qualities of his race. He had, of course, not a vestige of right to the grandiloquent title he assumed, but this boast of an ancient lineage is accountable for one of the best samples of his racy humour that have survived him. "Would four hundred years be considered an ancient pedigree in Ireland?" asked an English friend. "Is it B.C. that ye mean?" inquired The O'Gorman Mahon with an enigmatical twinkle in his eye.

The Clare Election is somewhat puzzling. At first it seems

to have been the intention to run Lord Frederick Conyngham in the Home Rule interest, but he found himself unable to become a candidate on account of ill-health. Accordingly, on the day when the local Nationalists were to make selections, The O'Gorman Mahon appeared, and announced that Captain O'Shea had written to Lord Frederick to say that if it were certain he would not stand he (O'Shea) would like to offer himself for Clare, and that at Lord Frederick's request he had seen O'Shea. He added that now, Lord Frederick not being available, he felt bound to say he was most anxious to have Captain O'Shea for colleague. Mr. O'Kelly, of London, who came to the meeting with a letter of recommendation from Mr. Parnell, and a Mr. Drinkwater, also offered their services, but The O'Gorman Mahon and O'Shea became the adopted standard-bearers. The whole affair leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

These two worthies, the most curiously assorted political twins in Irish history, fought the election without having much more than a brass farthing between them to pay the expenses. O'Shea probably knew enough of Irish history to believe that an Irish seat in the Commons might easily become a very valuable liquid asset. One evening, shortly after they won in Clare, the pair of penniless politicians came to Eltham, and O'Gorman Mahon filled Mrs. O'Shea's solitude with his bubbling merriment interspersed with political gossip. The Irish leader very naturally cropped up in the course of conversation. Mrs. O'Shea did not then know and had never seen him. "If you meet Parnell, Mrs. O'Shea," said the old adventurer, "be good to him." He then described the young statesman, his aloofness and reserve, and his "obviously bad health."

O'Shea then broke in and volunteered what, if it had not been the subject of arrangement between himself and his wife, must have astonished her—that they were going to give some "political dinners" in London, "and would ask Parnell, though he was sure he would not come." She declares that she was not greatly interested in the stories they were telling about Parnell, "though I mentally decided that if I gave any dinners to the Irish Party for Willie, I would make a point of getting Parnell."

At last the pair disclosed the real object of their visit to Eltham. Nearly all the election expenses had fallen to O'Shea's share, and he had guaranteed the expenses for both. The O'Gorman Mahon was almost penniless. The debt amounted to £2,000. They did not know where it was to come from. Mrs. O'Shea promised to see if her aunt would

help, and so the matter ended. It is a significant prologue to the tragedy proper. All this happened before the meeting of the Irish members in Dublin. O'Shea, perhaps under the influence of The O'Gorman Mahon, voted for Parnell. It is curious that O'Shea telegraphed to his wife stating what he had done, but fearing that Parnell would be too "advanced." It is not necessary, however, to attach significance to such formalities. The woman has declared that she was never a "political lady." In any case, there is the fact.

After Parliament met O'Shea repeated his desire that they should give some dinner parties in London, and for that purpose a couple of private rooms were taken in Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square, "my old haunt," is Mrs. Parnell's description of the place. Several dinners were given, to each of which Parnell was invited. He accepted, but did not put in an appearance. Other Irish members did, and it appears that someone drew attention to the vacant chair and defied Mrs. O'Shea to fill it. Tales then went round the table of the way Parnell had ignored the invitations of the leading political hostesses, and Mrs. O'Shea, put upon her mettle, determined to have the Irish leader at her table, evoking laughter and applause when she declared: "The uncrowned King of Ireland shall sit in that chair at the next dinner I give!"

Some time later she drove to Palace Yard with her sister, Mrs. Steele, and sent her card to Parnell in the House of Commons, asking him to come out and speak to them. He did so. He looked straight at her. According to herself, she thought instantly: "This man is wonderful—and different." She asked him why he had not answered her last invitation to dinner, and if anything would induce him to come. He made a conventional reply about not having opened his letters, said he was going to Paris to attend his sister's wedding, and promised he would come to dinner, if she would let him, directly he returned. This was the first time they met. She thus concludes her narrative of the fateful interview: "In leaning forward in the cab to say good-bye, a rose I was wearing in my bodice fell out on to my skirt. He picked it up, and touching it lightly with his lips, he placed it in his button-hole. This rose I found long years afterwards done up in an envelope, with my name and the date, among his most private papers, and when he died I laid it upon his heart."

On July 27, 1880, Parnell wrote to her for the first time, an easy, graceful letter, and again mentioned the visit to Paris, adding, "and on my return will write you again, and ask for an opportunity of seeing you." He did so, and a

dinner party was arranged, Parnell naming the date. It was a Friday. Mrs. Steele, Sir Matthew Wood, Mr. Justin McCarthy, and a few others were present. Boxes had been engaged for the Gaiety Theatre. On the day of the dinner a somewhat mysterious and inconsequential note was received by the hostess:—"House of Commons, Friday. My dear Mrs. O'Shea—I dined with the Blakes on Wednesday, and by the time dinner was over it was too late to go to the meeting—the post office is all right here. I cannot imagine who originated the paragraph. I have certainly made no arrangements up to the present to go either to Ireland or America, or announced any intention to anybody.—Yours, Chas. S. Parnell."

He was late, and looked ill—"painfully ill and white." It was a pleasant dinner party. They went to the theatre. He was glad to go there. He sat at the back of the box with Mrs. O'Shea. There they held their first *tête-à-tête*. He began to talk of his American tour and his broken health. He told her about his wooing, his engagement, how it came to be broken off, how he met the young lady again, how she had put the verses into his hand—went over the whole of the commonplace romance from first to last.

The woman tells us the entire story—the beginning of one of the most tragic amours in history—with meticulous detail—the sudden flame of his eyes, the low monotone of his voice, the thin face, the pinched nostrils, the feeling that possessed her "of complete sympathy and companionship with him, as though I had always known this strange, unusual man; that odd feeling of his having always been there by my side."

Philosophy is powerless in face of such reminiscent and adoring equanimity, nor would one pause a moment to contemplate scenes almost as familiar to the world as time itself but that the destiny of a great race was piteously involved in their dangerous though commonplace emotions. It serves no useful purpose to talk of inevitable affinities or to use those other weather-beaten excuses by which the squalors of romance are palliated. Parnell was young to have attained such masterful eminence and profound national responsibilities. The woman, considerably older than he, had been married thirteen long years. The hot flush of youth had passed away from both. The dignity and heart-ease of motherhood had come to the one: the call of a suffering and heroic nation to the other. Both were deaf to appeals that are overwhelming in their strength and exaltation. A historian has written that "the offence which led to his overthrow and then to his death will not militate against his

reputation in history." It may, indeed, be true that Clio is lenient to her heroes, but it will be a bad day for the happiness of man and the greatness of nations when such offences, however purged, leave no blot on the escutcheon.

Frequent meetings followed that evening at the theatre. Mrs. O'Shea went often to the Ladies' Gallery of the House. Parnell came to see her there. When the business in Parliament did not require his presence, they drove into the country or to the river side at Mortlake. They discussed her husband's chances of holding his seat in Clare. "Both Willie and I," she writes, "were very anxious to secure Mr. Parnell's promise about this, as The O'Gorman Mahon was old, and we were desirous of making Willie's seat in Parliament secure." Parnell promised a fatal promise—he would do his best to keep O'Shea in Parliament and to secure Clare for him. Thus the intimacy ripened.

In September he crossed to Ireland, and, as we have seen, plunged into a campaign for which there is no parallel in the history of the country. But his infatuation was now complete. On September 22 he wrote from Dublin: "I cannot keep myself away from you any longer, so I shall leave to-night for London." She was unable to meet him. On the 24th he re-crossed the Channel, went to the meeting at New Ross, and on the 29th he wrote again: "I am due at Cork on Sunday, after which I propose to visit London again, and renew my attempt to gain a glimpse of you." In the autumn he went to stay at Eltham, which may be said to have become from that time onward his home. He had spoiled his career. He had taken on a double life and a dual allegiance. Thereafter he lived over a volcano. It is unfortunately the dreadful fact which, say what one will, complicates, while it explains, much of the mystery of the remainder of his political life.

This sorry romance wrecked Parnell in the end, and the fortunes of his country were shattered by his fall, but there was nothing heroic in the tale from beginning to end; no circumstance that commonsense can consider an extenuation; nothing to lift it out of the meanness of the ordinary records of the divorce court. On the narrative now available to all who care to pursue it, it is only right to add that the man seems to have been the tempter throughout; but it may well be questioned whether it is either fair or possible to apportion the blame in such collaborations of passion. Davitt is reputed to have said of Parnell that "he was a cold-blooded sensualist." On Mrs. Parnell's showing, it is hard to resist that verdict. I just pause to note a curious difference

in the descriptions of Parnell as he was at this period. His widow's recollections are filled with his frailty and ill-health, his gaunt figure and deadly pallor. Pity they say is akin to love. Not so did he appear to one of his most observant colleagues. "He still looked young. The beauty of his delicate features, his cheeks healthy and full, the trim beard, the whole expression, pleased and yet not proud—boyish in its ingenuousness and its suggestion of modest wonder and deprecation—all combined to give him a look of fresh and immortal youth." The record of his tempestuous energy that momentous year tallies better with the portrait by Mr. O'Connor. For all that the world could see, Samson was still unfettered.

CHAPTER XXX.

BACK TO PENAL SERVITUDE.

BOTH Forster and Lord Cowper were anxious to govern with the aid of the ordinary law alone. But, in fact, this was only possible on condition that speedy ameliorative measures were undertaken, and some check placed upon the evictors. As the year advanced the Viceroy reported to the Cabinet an immense increase of agrarian crime. All the anti-Nationalists and the landlord class demanded the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. It was an old, rusty remedy, but merely an oppression, and therefore useless in this upheaval. The state of the country had, indeed, gone from bad to worse, and not a particle of real statesmanship was forthcoming from the Irish Executive or the English Cabinet. It was resolved to strike at the leaders, and if a verdict were not procured against them to resort to coercive legislation. The ancient errors of the English Government in Ireland were repeated. The State trial which ensued only served to advertise the Land League and disseminate more widely the speeches and teachings of the leaders.

Early in November the charges were laid—conspiracy against rent, eviction, the taking of evicted farms, and stirring up disaffection and ill-will. That was, in short, the meaning of the nineteen counts of the indictment. Parnell was served with the writ while he was at luncheon in the Imperial Hotel, Lower Sackville Street, with Mr. James O'Kelly, Mr. Tim Harrington, and an American journalist

named Redpath. A detective was ushered in, made himself known; Parnell rose, took the summons, smiled, sat down, and resumed his luncheon. He knew quite well the Government had blundered, and with audacious coolness proceeded to tell a newspaper correspondent what Gladstone ought to have done. The suggestion throws such a bold light upon his keen political insight and almost uncanny natural acumen, and at the same time illustrates so vividly his self-confidence and baffling composure that it is well worth reproducing. Gladstone, he said, should not have attempted anything beyond a measure of household suffrage, to which the Whigs were pledged; with a household suffrage constituency he could have dissolved Parliament, and returned with a Radical majority, which would have enabled him to carry a great measure of land reform. As a matter of Parliamentary tactics, this Napoleonic plan has nothing against it except that it did not strike the greatest Parliamentary manager of his age. As for the rest, Parnell expressed the belief that, as it was, the Land League movement could not suffer from the prosecutions. Had it been in its infancy, they would have stimulated it, but it was now strong, and in no need of such assistance. Contempt, after all, could go little further than this. He went on to expound a view which remained steadfast with him all his life and figured like an obsession in his last forlorn campaign. Sooner or later, he laid down, the demoralising power of the English Government would sap the independence of even the best party Ireland could send into the House of Commons. "I think," he added, "the Irish people ought not to place much trust in the independence of an Irish Party sitting in a foreign country at a distance from their constituents, and removed from the healthy influence of Irish opinion." At the same time he expressed confidence in his ability to maintain a vigorous independence among the party then in being while they were making a short, sharp and decisive fight for the restoration of legislative independence. If, after exhausting the resources of Parliamentary action, and after a reasonable time, they failed, he would consider it his duty to return to his country and announce that they had exhausted the means placed at their disposal within the constitution for regaining their national independence, and he would be prepared to take counsel with the representatives of the nation as to what action they should then adopt.

There is no reason to suppose that he did not speak these pregnant words with absolute sincerity. Reserve and suspicion are near relations. He made no secret of his belief

that Irish Parliamentarians were weak reeds for a nation to lean upon. He feared with a very special dread the corrupting influence of the English Executive. He went further. He had almost a superstitious conviction that even a foreign atmosphere deteriorated the fibre of an Irish politician. Perhaps the awful knowledge of his own weakness, hidden under that majestic exterior, may have nurtured this irresistible mistrust. Once at this period he was heard to murmur in his sleep: "Steer carefully out of the harbour—there are breakers ahead."

The State trials, in which Parnell and thirteen other leading spirits of the Land League figured, began in the Four Courts, Dublin, a few days after Christmas. The authorities made an extraordinary and senseless demonstration of force. The people in Dublin Castle have always had a penchant for such displays. On this occasion an incident of the day before the trial began alarmed them needlessly. The usual sessional meeting of the Irish Party was held in the City Hall. Parnell was re-elected to the chair, and at the adjournment for luncheon, when he emerged and entered a cab, he was surrounded by an enormous crowd, the horse was taken from the vehicle, and he was drawn in triumph through the streets to the Imperial Hotel. For a whole hour fully fifty thousand people waited in Sackville Street, and he was then again drawn back to the City Hall amid the cheers of the multitude. The *Freeman's Journal* thought it wise to warn the people the following morning that they should keep their feelings well in hand, and give the authorities no excuse for active interference.

Next day rain and snow helped the police to keep the streets cleared in the neighbourhood of the Four Courts, but those who saw the precautions taken in and around the stately temple of the laws were not likely ever to forget the spectacle. Constables on horseback and foot patrolled the quays, and kept strollers on the move. Cordons of constables were posted near the neighbouring bridges spanning the river. The great gates of the Courts were swung to, and held by lines of police within and without. A scrutiny of sedulous minuteness was exercised over all who tried to enter. The trial was held in the old Court of Queen's Bench, on the right-hand side of the clock in the Round Hall, and which has scarcely been changed in the least to this very day. A stout wooden barrier was erected across the entrance to the Court, as if it were expected to stand a bombardment, while lines of gigantic police were inside and outside this barrier. Even into the Court itself the monstrous precautions had

penetrated. Up in the gallery four herculean constables stood facing the audience with their huge and ridiculous-looking backs affronting the judges, while another body of police was kept in readiness within a building in the neighbourhood. Such minor incidents are only worth mentioning because they show the state of apprehension into which the Land League had driven the official classes. Being a great State trial in the time-honoured form, two of their lordships of the Queen's Bench sat beneath the archaic canopy embellished solely with the lion, unicorn and crown. The Chief Justice of the Division, May, ought to have kept his brothers company, but during one of the preliminary motions he emitted such a preposterous harangue from the bench that even the London Press censured him severely, and he retired with what grace he could muster from the actual trial of the traversers.

The proceedings were dull except for the spirited speeches of the defending barristers, some of them men of great eloquence and skill. They pocketed atrocious fees, but were held to have given good value. Old speeches were read out, until all Dublin was weary. Even Miss Fanny Parnell's verses were invoked, and Parnell smiled—"a very pleasant smile, merry and natural"—when he heard the trumpet-tongued lines of his gifted sister.

"The birds of prey are hovering round, the vultures wheel
and swoop—
They come, the coronetted ghouls! with drum-beat and
with troop—
They come to fatten on your flesh, your children's and your
wives';
Ye die but once—hold fast your lands, and if you can, your
lives."

Parnell as he sat in court wore a small skull-cap. His hair was beginning to thin, but the cap, which excited an absurd amount of attention, was as superfluous a safeguard as the more elaborate precautions of the Castle officials. He was sometimes embarrassed by the crowds as he drove away in the evening, and escaped their generous attention by taking to the dingy streets behind the quays, but as the trial extended itself to the length of a public nuisance, and the authorities recognised the childishness of their mammoth precautions, people were allowed to penetrate into the Round Hall—that forensic market-place trodden by so many of the finest and the lowest of Irishmen—and scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed as the leader and other popular heroes put in

an appearance. Often Parnell's car was followed along the quays by cheering crowds, and on one occasion an unique demonstration was made by admiring soldiers, who flung their caps into the air as he passed, and shouted for the man who had put down flogging in the army.

It is not improbable that the Government from an early stage of the proceedings scented failure. At the swearing of the jury the Crown Solicitor, exercising his right of exclusion, began to order Catholics to stand by. When he had thus accounted for three Papists, one of the junior counsel for the traversers, Mr. John Ayde Curran, drew the attention of his leader, the famous Mr. MacDonough, to his action. MacDonough was an advocate of infinite resource and élan. In a moment he had thrown up his hands as if his very life depended on the protest, and in a loud voice shouted : " My God, he is striking off every Catholic." The Crown Solicitor was abashed ; no other Catholics were excluded, and the jury as empanelled had the look of a disagreement from the very start. Later on the Crown had to abandon one of the counts of the indictment. This was the charge of exciting ill-will and disaffection. MacDonough contended that on this charge he had the right of examining witnesses as to the rapacious tyranny of the landlords, and persons were waiting from various parts of the country to give evidence of eviction clearances and other oppressive proceedings. The judges assented, but rather than face this ordeal the Crown withdrew the charge.

After a hearing of twenty days and a final whirl of oratorical brilliancy, the jury disagreed. There were ten for an acquittal. As Parnell hurried out of court, victor and hero of the hour, he became the centre of a demonstration of frantic and triumphant delight. He jumped on an outside car, and hastened to the boat for England, followed by shouts of " Long Live the Chief "—the name by which he was known from that day until he was carried to the grave along the self-same highway.

The Viceroy had prepared the Cabinet for this result, and warned them that in the event of failure the Habeas Corpus Act would have to be suspended. Crime was rising. He would resign unless his views were adopted. Now the worst had actually happened. Trial by jury had broken down in the capital of Ireland. Parnell had crossed to London, the virtual ruler of the country.

When the State trial ended, he turned to Davitt and prophesied that the Government would arrest him. Unfortunately for poor Davitt, he proved only too reliable a prophet.

"We have beaten them again," he said, "and now they will go for you." It was a truly terrible prospect for the "ticket-of-leave man," but he was fully alive to the risks he was running. It is a fact that must never be lost sight of in the study of Davitt's operations during these abnormal years, that he was the one prominent man in all Ireland most open to attack. Even the subterfuge of a packed jury did not stand between him and the vengeance of the ruling caste. He had only to become obnoxious to the Government to be imprisoned. His sentence had eight years to run, and that was the fearful penalty which shadowed his steps all through the beginning of the fierce struggle to win freedom for the Irish peasant. The Government were now to prove that he was running no merely theoretical risk, but before the blow fell he succeeded in doing some more work of great importance to the agrarian movement. The Ladies' Land League was formally established and incorporated in the movement. Parnell's sister, Anna, became one of its leading spirits.

Davitt now began a task which might have had enormous effects on the whole future of Ireland. In the last months of 1880 the Land League commenced to feel its way in Ulster. The Ulster farmers, amongst the most hard-headed of men, began to see the immense possibilities of the agrarian agitation. They were in a position to judge how influential, politically and otherwise, the farming classes would become when effectually organised. So far, all the victories had rested with the League. Land meetings were held in several of the counties along the border, and at some of them prominent Land Leaguers put in an appearance, and were well received. This new phase of the movement soon looked promising and formidable. Protestant and Catholic tenants attended the meetings. Orangemen took a hand. Land League meetings were organised upon territory hitherto regarded as sacred preserves of Orangeism, and with every sign of general acceptance. The landlords and leaders of the Orange Society at last took alarm, and such men as Lord Rossmore stirred "the brethren" to hostility, threatened to drive the Leaguers from Ulster, organised counter meetings, and put a very nasty aspect on the situation. Rumours were circulated that the Orangemen were arming, but that did not deter the agitators. It was more significant to note that at meetings of farmers the Pope began to receive an amount of attention which could not be accounted for by any particularly close association of His Holiness with the three F's. It was plain that the landlords and Tory politicians of the North were relying in their hour of peril upon the ancient weapons

of sectarian bigotry. Still, the new doctrines and movement made headway, and the Secretary of the Armagh Tenant-Farmers' Association announced that a Northern Land League was about to be formed, prepared to adopt all the principles of the parent body. The landlords replied with an Anti-Land League Association, and, curiously enough, they declared their anxiety to have a settlement with their tenants on "equitable terms."

Davitt now prepared to invade Ulster himself. He had already publicly deprecated some anti-Orange language used at a Land League meeting. He did not like, he said, to hear any observations that were calculated to alienate Orangemen from the movement. Even before this he had, in a formal manifesto, invited the Orangemen to unite with the men of the west and south in this new crusade of agrarian redemption. A meeting which he addressed in County Armagh was one of the most remarkable of the time. The organisers of the meeting were the members of the branch of the Land League at Loughgall, but the actual scene was a field at Kinnego, which chanced to belong to Parnell. The Chairman of the day was Mr. James Weir, Grand Master of the local Orange Lodge, and at least a considerable proportion of the audience that listened respectfully and attentively to the young Fenian convict were Protestants and Presbyterians. Davitt began his speech with the words: "Mr. Chairman, Protestant tenant-farmers of Armagh and Orangemen of Kinnego." It was a long time since such a hopeful spectacle had been seen in Ireland, and Davitt's speech was worthy of the inception of an epoch. There is no knowing how his campaign would have developed but for the intervention of events which once again prevented a blending of North with South. The occasion was fraught with significance and importance, but its fruition was frustrated by the cruellest conjunction of misfortunes.

There were now half a million members enrolled in the Land League. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was imminent. Coercion, combined with a Land Bill, was evidently the policy of the Ministry. Davitt considered that the moment had arrived to play a trump card. He would bring the whole movement to a head in a single moment. Just one decisive blow would be struck. The issue would be resolved on the instant. With Mr. Andrew Kettle he crossed to England, and proposed to Parnell that they should declare a general strike against rent. We now know more about general and sympathetic strikes than was known in 1881. They have not been conspicuous successes, and it is

possible that failure would have followed one at that time. But it is right to remember that the Government were greatly embarrassed by South Africa, that all Ireland with the exception of Ulster was at the back of Parnell, and that the spirit of the people was just then at the finest fighting pitch. It would have been a dramatic stroke, but enterprises must be more than dramatic to achieve such success as was imperative in this case. Later in the year a No-Rent Manifesto was issued, but Davitt was then under lock and key. It is almost certain that the bold policy he now laid before Parnell was not only bold but sagacious, and had a reasonable chance of success. The Parliamentarians could not agree upon it. It has been said that Parnell might have consented but for this. At all events Davitt returned to Ireland without having accomplished his mission.

He landed at Dublin on the night of February 2. The Government had already determined to deliver him once again into penal servitude. Two detectives from Scotland Yard came to Dublin to take him into custody. They invoked the assistance of Mallon, the Chief Superintendent of the Police in Dublin. He was a man of some tact, and, unlike many of the Irish police officers of the time, was averse from collisions with the populace. He sent one of his own subordinates to fetch Davitt. The officer met him crossing Carlisle, now O'Connell, Bridge, on February 3, and told him Mallon would like to see him. Davitt went at once to the police office in the Lower Castle Yard. "Do you want me?" he asked Mallon. "I don't, Mr. Davitt, was the reply; "but here are two gentlemen from Scotland Yard who are anxious for your company. This is Mr. Williamson, Chief Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department. Mr. Williamson, this is Mr. Davitt, whom you wanted to see." One may just as well be polite on such occasions. Davitt expressed his willingness to accompany the officers, and he was already well on his way to London and penal servitude before Dublin was aware of his trouble. I do not know what reliance can be placed on the statement which appears in a book of Mallon's reminiscences by Frederick Moir Bussy, that a revolver which Davitt was carrying at the time of his re-arrest had actually been loaned to him by the police, "who had unearthed the suspicion of a plot for his assassination at the hands of his erstwhile confederates of the Fenian movement. The police had notified Davitt of that fact, and strongly urged him to carry firearms for his personal protection."

On February 5 Davitt was locked up in Portland, and there

he remained for a year and three months. His imprisonment this time was greatly mitigated. Davitt had exposed the infamies of Dartmoor to the world. He had shamed the English prison system in all civilised lands. He was now a prominent public man, well known in two continents. More important still, Parnell with a small but efficient party of independent men was operating in the House of Commons. It would have been scarcely possible to renew upon him the horrors which he had described to the disgust and amazement of all who heard them. At any rate, he was now treated more like a human being than a wild animal. The governor of the jail acted with consideration. The unhappy prisoner was able to devote himself to literary work, and he produced a little book which is a masterpiece of its kind, and indispensable to students of criminology. The governor gave him for companion a young blackbird. "For some months," he wrote in the preface to the work of which I speak, "I relieved the tedium of my solitude by efforts to win the confidence of my companion, with the happiest results. He would stand upon my breast as I lay in bed in the morning and waken me from sleep. He would perch upon the edge of my plate and share my porridge. His familiarity was such that on showing him a small piece of slate pencil and then placing it in my waistcoat pocket he would immediately abstract it. He would perch upon the edge of my slate as it was adjusted between my knees, and watching the course of the pencil as I wrote, would make the most amusing efforts to peck the marks off the slate. He would 'fetch and carry' as faithfully as any well-trained dog. Towards evening he would resort to his perch, the post of the iron bedstead, and there remain, silent and still, till the dawning of another day, when his chirrup would again be heard, like the voice of nature, before the herald of civilisation, the clang of the prison bell at five o'clock. One evening as 'Joe' sat upon his perch it occurred to me to constitute him chairman and audience of a course of lectures; and with him constantly before me as the representative of my fellow-creatures I jotted down what I have substantially reproduced in the following pages." And when the book appeared on the author's release from prison, it came to the hands of the public dedicated "To the memory of the little confiding friend, whose playful moods and loving familiarity helped to cheer the solitude of a convict cell." Thus placidly was he forced to pass the heavy hours who had shortly before been the mainspring of one of the fiercest and most turbulent agitations Ireland had seen in all her exciting story.

“ Leaves from a Prison Diary ” is far more worthy of study than most of the pretentious pseudo-scientific works which have been written around the criminal. Full of honest pathos and quite sly humour, with many excellent anecdotes excellently told, and vivid descriptions, it is beyond all else a keen and minute analysis of the criminal as he is known in English society, and a searching and convincing indictment of the prison system as it then was, with a series of thoughtful and industriously balanced suggestions for its improvement. The beneficent plan of classification, designed primarily for the rescue of prisoners from criminality, is as much due to the initial advocacy of Davitt as to any other cause. Whoever would gain a clear insight into the story and methods of the English criminal cannot afford to overlook this masterly study; but what most delights and, indeed, astonishes the reader is the equanimity of the pages, giving no evidence of bitterness or resentment at the savage treatment he had himself suffered, and which he touches upon with a serene and philosophical composure, and only for the purpose of using his own sad experience to effect some lightening of the lot of those condemned to the prison cell and the convict workshop. Not content, however, with internal reforms in the prison system, he extends his survey to the social condition of the poorer classes and to the educational methods by which they might be elevated, to their housing and their labour; and, finally, he examines the Irish problem in some of its aspects with a cogency and earnestness which are characteristic of all his writings. Davitt endured his fate like a man. He neither complained nor repined. In a letter to his sister Sabina, he contrasted his present quarters with “ Dartmoor of rheumatic memory,” and said he was enjoying all those favourite disciplinary conditions of life by which health, wealth and wisdom are at least proverbially acquired. He renewed a promise he had made to bring her back to Ireland some day, and told how he knew of the honours which the Ladies’ Land League of Philadelphia had done him by decorating his mother’s grave. Amongst the few who visited him in prison was Dr. Croke, the illustrious Archbishop of Cashel.

One word must be added as to his re-committal to penal servitude. It was a Cabinet act. Sir William Harcourt was the Home Secretary, and the Minister nominally responsible, but Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain and the rest were parties to the decision. It was essentially a mean manoeuvre. Davitt had not repeated the offences of which he had been guilty in the ‘sixties. He was now engaged in an admittedly

constitutional movement. He had been active in denouncing crime and outrage. He had incurred Fenian hostility by departing from the old lines of political conspiracy. It is true that he advised tenants to pay nothing but a fair and reasonable rent, and that he had recommended boycotting. As to that, Gladstone lived to see the day when he himself explained away boycotting to the full satisfaction of his conscience; and as to the rents, the courts of justice were shortly to vindicate the denunciations of the Land League. But, in any case, if Davitt had infringed the law, he ought to have been tried for the specific offence, and appropriately punished. No Minister of the day would have dared to assert that whatever that offence was it was punishable with penal servitude, and that is the punishment to which Mr. Gladstone's Government consigned him. Sir William Harcourt, in the House of Commons, attempted a defence in reply to a scathing accusation by Parnell, but it is unworthy of acceptance. He charged that Davitt in founding the Land League was establishing Fenianism under another form, and quoted amongst his proofs an early speech of the prisoner, in which he said: "If your patience becomes exhausted by Government brutality, and every right and privilege which is your God-given inheritance be trampled upon by evictive power the world will hold England responsible and not you if the wolfdog of Irish vengeance bounds over the Atlantic at the very heart of that power from which it is now held back by the influence of the League." He maintained that things had improved, that speakers had become more careful since Davitt's incarceration, and held that if the Government had not acted they would have left the people under the impression they were afraid of him and his braggart talk. The blustering defence only makes the conclusion irresistible that the Ministry simply wreaked their vengeance on his head because the State trial of Parnell had proved abortive, and because Davitt was a formidable power in the agrarian agitation. The tyranny of Liberals is a prolific theme, affording endless opportunity for profitable meditation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

COERCION.

WHEN the House met in January, Parnell was the most important man within it, excepting Mr. Gladstone, and it

is a question whether even Mr. Gladstone at that moment wielded as much power as the Irish leader. Again, I must revert to the divergent descriptions penned of him as he was at this particular moment. One who saw him at Avondale a few months before the opening of Parliament tells us he was in splendid physical condition. He had thinned himself down. He walked splendidly. He had the air of a highly trained athlete. He was just a little bald at the top of his head, and was strangely sensitive on the point. He himself seemed pleased with his condition. "Yes," he said, in response to a compliment, "I'm in very good form; quite equal, I think, to five years' penal servitude from old Forster." It would, perhaps, have been fortunate for himself had Forster at that moment taken it into his head to substitute him for Davitt. A very different description comes from another quarter: "I do not think anyone but we who saw him then at Eltham, without the mask of reserve he always presented to the outside world, had any idea of how near death's door his exertions on behalf of the famine-stricken peasants of Ireland had brought him." Parnell was a highly-strung man. Although he secured complete command over himself on the public platform, the close observer could often detect evidences of intense nervousness. Such men are chameleon-like in their changes. They can put forth extraordinary energy and exhale the most infectious vitality on occasion, but they often suffer reactions of agonising depression. It may, indeed, have been thus with this extraordinary man.

He had gone through a year that would have taxed the strength of Hercules: the opening turbulences of the land movement, the beginning of the famine, the whirlwind tour in America, the stormy and ubiquitous activities of the General Election, an exacting Parliamentary session, an autumn campaign of incessant energy, public speaking and travel, the excitement of a great trial, which he must have endured with irritation and some anxiety in spite of his outward indifference. It would not have been wonderful had such labours prostrated him. And now Nemesis began to torture him for his guilty secret. Already O'Shea had suspicions. Vague rumours reached him. It appears that it was he who had invited Parnell to Eltham, but that Parnell had made the suggestion, and had urged it, evidently in a way that did not excite suspicion. Mrs. O'Shea herself says she opposed the notion when it was first broached. In January, 1881, O'Shea came suddenly to his wife's house. He was very angry. He had seen some men watching his

lodgings in Charles Street, Haymarket, and thought she had placed a detective on his quarters. The incident shows what seamy and crooked relations existed between the couple. A violent quarrel broke out between them. O'Shea found Parnell's portmanteau in the place. He sent it off to London, and left the house, threatening to challenge Parnell and shoot him. O'Shea did send a challenge by, of all men in the world, our old acquaintance, The O'Gorman Mahon, himself a noted duellist in his youth. The affair was patched up. Mrs. Steele, whom we have met already, made peace between the O'Sheas, and Parnell, while making arrangements to go abroad for the duel, told the challenger that "he must have a medium of communication between the Government and himself, that Mrs. O'Shea had kindly undertaken the office for him, and as this would render negotiations possible and safe, he trusted that Willie would make no objection to his meeting her after the duel." Some letters passed between Parnell and the Captain, and with an audacity which provokes a smile, the wrongdoer announced to Mrs. O'Shea that because of "a very insulting letter" he had received from her husband he would be obliged to send a friend to him unless he got a satisfactory reply to a second note he had just sent. There was no duel. O'Shea seems to have been hoodwinked by Parnell's impudence. He began to think he had been too hasty, and, the woman adds, "knowing I had become immersed in the Irish cause, merely made the condition that Mr. Parnell should not stay at Eltham." So the unpalatable affair was allowed to drop for the present, but the unsavoury quarrel merely cemented the dishonouring bond between the clandestine lovers. By this time the pair had begun to exchange confidences in cypher.

To imagine that these private harassments did not sorely perturb Parnell would be to regard him as the acme of callousness, but the Irish cause held such a grip upon his mind and soul that when he emerged into his political sphere he appeared possessed by it alone. We almost entirely forget the unhealthy domestic atmosphere in which he had begun to exist when we follow him out into the open air, and feel even at this distance of time the spell and the thrill of his invigorating leadership. Nothing demonstrates his real inherent greatness as a political leader more than the stately supremacy he asserted and the irresistible power he exercised, while all along he was absolutely at the mercy of one of the most insignificant of men. Nor can we withhold a thought of honest pity from the ill-starred woman fallen under the alluring

sway of this gentle yet imperious man, who extorted sympathy from her for the downtrodden peasants whose battle he was waging against his own class. She assures us that he was wont to tear her heart with the stories of their woes and with descriptions of the harshness he had seen inflicted upon them.

By the time Parliament met the Cabinet had been won over to coercion by Cowper and Forster, egged on by the landlords and the officials at Dublin Castle. The cry now was coercion first, a Land Act afterwards. Morley tries to justify Gladstone for not tackling the root evil, the land question, in the previous year. It would be no great achievement and no conceivable consolation to strike out just one from the blunders of English statesmanship in regard to Ireland. The delay was a triviality, however unfortunate, compared with the truculent amelioration now resolved upon. Of ordinary crime as distinguished from agrarian crime, Ireland was wonderfully free. Mr. T. W. Russell, then a temperance organiser in Dublin, and not a Home Ruler, emphasised that fact in a letter to the press. To a man of ordinary common-sense, it would seem a blatant absurdity to imprison the Land Leaguers first and concede nearly the whole of their programme immediately afterwards. But it has really demanded something approaching genius to perpetrate the stupidities of English Government in Ireland.

The Queen's Speech heralded the Coercion Bill. Parnell resolved to resume his obstructive tactics, and to stimulate a struggle "such as never has been seen within the walls of Parliament." He spun the debate on the Address for no less than eleven nights. Forster expressed keen sorrow for having to ask for coercive powers. Had he foreseen his position he would have abandoned Parliamentary life, but his duty, he said, was clear. Parnell practised no subtlety. The overpowering strength of his case was its simplicity and reasonableness. The Government admitted the wrongs of the people. Redress the wrongs, stop evictions, and crime would disappear. Finally, he announced his intention frankly to obstruct the passage of the Coercion Bill.

It was introduced by the Chief Secretary on January 24, and for six nights the debate on the first reading was maintained. The able pen of Mr. Barry O'Brien has preserved for us many instances of Parnell's incessant watchfulness during this memorable debate. We see him all over the House, in the chamber itself, in the reading-room, plunging into books for useful references, in the lobbies catching colleagues straying from the field, returning one to the House

to keep a quorum and watch the enemy, sending back another to intervene in the debate, holding up an Irish Whig about his vote, lecturing, cajoling, persuading, terrorising, breathing his influence into the nooks and crannies of the place, filling the very passages with his personality, swaying the currents of the legislature, his eyes ever following the movements of Ministers, his energy pervading the Irish benches, his resource always quick and sure. If he be absent for a space his comrades feel the void, and yearn for his inspiring presence. They are confident when he is near, uneasy when he is away. He can raise a storm at his pleasure, and survey the breakers with the serenity of Neptune. A nod from him soothes the raging sea. His forces have grown, but they are still pathetically small; yet he marshals them so astutely and makes them feel their strength so confidently that they think lightly of the crowding foes arrayed against them. They refuse to recognise the monstrous odds. At his word they keep the fighting going through the toilsome day, along the racking watches of the night. Even their physical strength obeys his behests. His command chases sleep from their heavy eyelids and steadies their weary limbs. Small wonder Ireland at this moment adored her leader.

He made no effort to conceal his obstructive intentions. He kept the House sitting from four o'clock on Tuesday evening till two o'clock the following afternoon. The Government determined to finish the first reading on the night of January 31. Parnell and his band of thirty baffled them for forty-one hours. Speaker Brand now came to the rescue of the House and the Government. He has himself written an account of the *coup* he attempted. He entered into an arrangement with Gladstone stipulating certain conditions in return for which he would put the motion peremptorily at a certain time on a particular day. His action is open to much criticism, but let it be conceded that Parnell's tactics would have tried the patience of the angels. For the moment the *coup* succeeded, but later in the day, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, with exquisite adroitness, inveigled the Speaker into a discussion of his summary proceeding, and the Irish members, turning defeat into victory, managed to render Mr. Brand's startling manœuvre practically abortive. Gladstone, however, considered that he had "rendered possible a really important result," but its beneficence may well be questioned when it is remembered that it was followed by closure proposals, which, in the words of Morley, "sprang up like mushrooms." The muzzling of the Great Inquest of the nation was proceeding apace. New rules of a drastic

kind were quickly thrust down the throat of the Mother of Parliaments.

On the very day they were proposed the news of Davitt's arrest reached the House. It was well calculated to enrage the Irish members, now faced with a Ministerial instrument designed to rob them of their weapon of obstruction. Parnell rose, and asked was the news true. "Yes, sir," replied Harcourt. A tempest of cheers from the English members served to sharpen the anger of the Irish. He added that Davitt's conduct was not such as to justify his retention of the ticket-of-leave. Parnell hotly demanded to know the conditions he had violated, but there was no reply, and Gladstone rose to move the closure resolution. Mr. John Dillon rose too. Shouts from all sides deafened the House. The Speaker ordered Dillon to sit down, and called on the Premier. The Irish member refused to give way. He was "named" to the House. Gladstone moved his suspension. The House agreed. He refused to withdraw. The Sergeant-at-Arms was called upon, and removed him. Gladstone again arose. Parnell jumped to his feet, and sprang upon the now frenzied assembly the defiant motion: "That the right honourable gentleman be no longer heard." A scene unparalleled in Parliament was witnessed. The noise became astonishing. Excitement reached fever heat. The Speaker refused to listen to the Irish leader. Parnell insisted. He was named, and instantly suspended for wilful and deliberate obstruction. When the House was cleared for the division on this motion thirty-two Irish members refused to leave their seats, though cautioned by the Speaker. Parnell left the House. Gladstone again rose. Another Irish member repeated Parnell's audacious motion. Suspension was again moved: again the Irish refused to budge, and they were all at once named to the House, and suspended *en bloc*. The field was now clear for the Pyrrhic victor, and Gladstone imposed the new fetters on debate.

But the struggle against the Coercion Bill was not yet over. The fight in the Commons was kept going until February 25, when the Bill was sent up to a Chamber eager to expedite its way to the Statute Book. It became a law of the land on March 2. Habeas Corpus no longer existed in Ireland. The enormous power was conferred on the Viceroy to arrest anyone whom the police or officials of Dublin Castle suspected of agrarian offences or treasonable practises, and to keep him or her in prison without definite specific charges having been made, without enquiry or trial of any kind whatever, and for any length of time up to the expiration of the

statute on September 30, 1882. It is not exaggerating to say that the constitutional liberties of three-fourths of the Irish people were to all intents and purposes suspended absolutely and completely for that period.

It is now over thirty years since this preposterous blunder was committed by Gladstone, his Government, and the British Parliament. The blunder has been fully and frankly admitted on all hands since; but the explanations ventured upon have only served to show the inherent stupidity of alien rule in Ireland. Bright practically based his excuse on the necessity the Premier had of avoiding resignations from the Ministry. But the retort is that he was content to face that exigency in the year following. Bright also pleaded "In face of the representations of the Irish Government, it was impossible to avoid trying it." But what kind of man was he whom the Premier and Cabinet accepted as the mouthpiece of the Irish Executive? Mr. Gladstone himself said of Forster: "He was a very impracticable man, placed in a position of great responsibility." Sooner than lose the services of this gentleman the Perseus of the Bulgarian maiden let loose a tyranny on Ireland which in these later days we would describe as Prussian in its thoroughness and malignity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TENANTS' CHARTER.

HAVING passed their Coercion Act the Government, or rather Mr. Gladstone—for Morley assures us there was hardly a man in the House beyond the Irish ranks who cared a straw about the Land Bill—proceeded to pass a measure to secure to the Irish peasantry the very objects the agitation for which the Coercion Act was designed by the people in Dublin Castle to punish and if possible suppress. It is not necessary to go into the details of this great measure. We have got a great deal further in the generation which has elapsed since the Tories thought it ruined "property as a principle." Plank after plank of the Land League programme has been appropriated by successive Governments, and a Conservative Ministry have adopted and given legislative effect to its ultimate end in the Wyndham Land Purchase Act. But that it was a really great and comprehensive measure is now nowhere denied. Passed the previous year, it would have

saved oceans of blood and misery. He conferred the three F's on the Irish tenant-farmers—Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale. It must be for ever considered the great charter of the Irish peasant. Gladstone piloted the Bill through with consummate dexterity and patience. It was considered during fifty-eight sittings, and the veteran statesman never deserted his post from first to last. A few facts which have come to light about the germination of the Bill are very interesting as throwing a light upon the shaping by English statesmanship of Irish affairs. An Ulster Liberal member warned the Government that if their policy were a strong Coercion Bill and a weak Land Bill they could not rely on Ulster; unless they accepted the three F's they had better not legislate at all. The three F's were accordingly accepted. The Bill, as it was actually presented to the Commons, was the twenty-second which the Cabinet had considered. The series began with a mere amendment of the Act of '70. The agitation in Ireland grew, and as uproar and tumult and outrage grew the Land Bills grew with them, until the measure assumed the stately shape and proportions in which it finally appeared. "Without the Land League," said Gladstone a dozen years afterwards, "the Act of 1881 would not now be on the Statute Book."

It was not easy at the time to understand Parnell's attitude in regard to the Bill. It is now clear that he played a game of subtle cleverness. He was not one of those who considered that a good Land Bill would do harm to the Irish cause. It is certain that he wanted as good a Bill as he could obtain. At the same time it did not suit his purpose to become in any way responsible for the Bill or its provisions. For one thing, he hesitated to feed the people with too much hope based upon the measure. For another, he knew well that in Ireland an Act of Parliament and its administration and interpretation are altogether different things. The Irish members did try to amend the Government proposals, and with some success. They also took care never to allow the Bill to become endangered. Whenever adverse criticism was safe they let the Bill have it in abundance. This was Parnell's plan. He compelled the party to walk out without voting for the second reading, threatening to resign if they did not do so. A political clique had been plotting and fomenting sedition against his leadership on the assumption that he would declare his acceptance of the Bill. This threat, suddenly delivered, blew the plot and plotters sky-high. It was one of those stealthy, deadly decisions which made him a perplexing character to friend and foe alike. Again, on the

third reading, when the Bill was perfectly assured, he walked out without voting, taking some of his followers with him.

Parnell's business now lay in Ireland, and he managed to make a dramatic and defiant exit from the House as perhaps the best inauguration of the campaign he intended to begin on the morrow at the other side of St. George's Channel. On August 1 he rose, and demanded a day for the discussion of the proceedings of the Irish Executive since the Coercion Act came into operation. He had been blamed, he said, for allowing the captive to rest in his prison cell, unnoticed and uncared for, and he believed the majority of the Irish members could no longer allow this neglect to continue in regard to these suffering and helpless men. He taunted the Government as a *deus ex machina* and the Premier as a sort of ancient Jove. In an adroit parenthesis he accused the Ministry of opening his letters, and passed on to the captives again—"the men who had won the Land Bill"—whereupon he was called to order. But he merely aggravated his offence, for he did not hesitate to taunt the Speaker himself. "The Ministry of the day," he hissed out, "of course always gain the sympathies of the powers that be in the House, and if we may not bring the cause of our imprisoned countrymen before the House, I may say that all liberty and regard of private right is lost to this assembly, and that the Minister of the day has transformed himself from a constitutional Minister into a tyrant."

Loud shouts of "Name him" broke out on all sides. The Speaker did name him for disregarding the authority of the House. Gladstone rose, but Parnell, raising his voice to its loudest, shouted, from the gangway, above the yells of "Order": "I shall not wait the farce of a division. I shall leave you and your House, and I shall call the public to witness that you have refused us freedom of discussion." He then put on his hat and coat and started for Ireland, while Gladstone, whose breath was fairly taken away by the unexpected whirlwind, could only move that the words just uttered be taken down, gasping out: "I have never heard such words spoken in the House."

Next day Parnell appeared at a meeting of the Land League in Dublin, and explained that he was enabled to attend owing to the little incident of the night before. With that sly defiance of Speaker, Government, and Parliament, he entered into an explanation why he had not voted for the second reading of the Land Bill. "This Bill has been brought forward by the Government," he said, "in order to prop up for a few years longer the expiring system of land-

lordism." The principles of the Bill were not the principles of the Land League. The ownership of the soil of Ireland by the people—that was their aim, and with that declaration he began the memorable campaign which, before Christmas, landed him in Kilmainham Jail.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PEOPLE.

FORSTER lost no time in putting the Coercion Act in full swing. He professed to loathe coercion, but he used it as if it were the hobby of his life. The landlord class and the official ring centred in Dublin Castle, amongst the most foolish partisans on earth, rejoiced in the belief that they had the agitation at their mercy. Whiteside, when Attorney-General, had said, "Larcom and the police is the Government of Ireland." Now, many were convinced that Burke, the Under-Secretary at the Castle, was the Government, but the police managed to retain a substantial slice of authority and initiative. Even the individual constable assumed an importance which would have been amusing but for some of its deplorable results. Rumours had got abroad that there was dissaffection in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and the authorities, by their tactlessness, imparted some slight colour to the suggestion. But the members of the force soon rose to the occasion, and gave a display of hostility to their own kith and kin which settled the question of their leanings and sympathies. No German mercenaries in the Middle Ages gave more thoroughgoing value for their money. Individually and collectively the Irish police seemed to have some special vengeance to pay out against the people from whom they took their origin. This is strong language, but it will be fully justified in the narrative that follows.

Meetings were suppressed here and there to begin with, and rumours, suspiciously opportune, began to circulate of Fenian activity, and of importation of arms and ammunition and dynamite. Whether deliberately or not, Forster had obtained the Coercion Act from the House of Commons under false pretences. He had represented the trouble in Ireland as the work of a comparatively few men—"village ruffians" was the conciliatory epitome used by this exemplary English Quaker. Whatever he had said he would, of course, have got his Act, but the squirmey explanations of Gladstone in

later years indicate that at least one member of the Cabinet lived to regret and resent the imposition. The assumption was that when a few village ruffians had been cast into jail the turmoil would subside. Forster represented the Irish people as longing secretly for the chance to be free from the nightmare imposed upon them; that he was speaking their earnest, though silent, wishes; and that they would thank him for his courage and effort. It is possible Forster believed this bedlamite rigmarole. That he got four or five hundred British members of Parliament and a Cabinet, which included Gladstone, Bright, and Chamberlain to listen to it, is surely a crowning proof of the impossibility of governing Ireland from a number of streets in and around Westminster. At any rate, the jails began to fill in a way that belied Forster totally, unless Ireland held scarcely any people except "village ruffians." Mr. John Dillon and Father Sheehy were amongst the earliest arrests. Soon the *Freeman's Journal* appeared with a startling list of "suspects" in prison, stretching out to more than three long columns of the paper. Forster was revelling in the work he professed to hate. He was at last body and bones in the grip of the Irish official and landlord cabal.

Parnell now completed a project which he had had in mind for some time. He required a newspaper under his control, and after some negotiations a small company was formed, the notorious Richard Pigott was bought out of the journals he was running on a not too creditable method, and Mr. William O'Brien was secured from the *Freeman's Journal* to edit a new paper, which was destined to become one of the most remarkable and effective organs of the Irish Nationalist press. *United Ireland* appeared on the troubled scene on August 13, 1881.

The Irish leader next threw himself head foremost into an election contest in Tyrone on behalf of the Rev. Harold Rylett, a Non-Conformist clergyman, standing against Whig and Tory. It was Parnell's first set campaign in Ulster. In the autumn of 1877 he had addressed a meeting in Derry, but he had never since been as far north as he now journeyed. His campaign was, like all his campaigns, vigorous and thorough. He went through the whole constituency, missing scarcely a single considerable town. At Ballygawley he had to meet a stormy throng, but elsewhere he was well received, and spoke to large audiences. The election was lost by Rylett, to the great satisfaction of the Government, who drew the most fallacious hopes from it; but the campaign of the leader was significant, coming after Davitt's incursion earlier

in the year, and carried instructive lessons, which Parnell would probably have turned to account but for the calamitous circumstances that soon crowded upon him. He did not expect to win the election, but he declared openly that it was a good opportunity of disseminating the doctrines of the Land League and making good Land Leaguers in Tyrone. In Derry City he had a singular experience. Before he entered the hall, where a large and enthusiastic audience awaited him, Mr. Claudius Beresford, bearer of a name of hateful memories, got upon the platform and began to harangue the meeting. He had been *aide-de-camp* to the Duke of Marlborough, and was son of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. "Citizens of Derry," he began, "I do not take the trouble to come to have the honour of speaking to you except for important and serious reasons. My eldest brother is lying on the point of death. My father, therefore, cannot come here. All I want you to do, gentlemen, is to maintain the honour of the city of Derry, and don't allow the agitators——" The speaker was at once stopped, seized, and packed unceremoniously off the platform. The incident serves to indicate the alarm with which the ruling classes viewed Parnell's activities in Ulster. He did not condescend to refer to the affair when he came to speak. He described the Land Bill as something gained by the way. How much it was they could not yet tell, but they feared, as usual with gifts from England, there might be more mischief than good concealed in it; but with the organisation they had, and the knowledge the people had obtained of their just rights, they believed they would be able to work the Bill in such a way as to prevent any demoralisation or harm coming from its use, and to get any good that might be in it for the tenant-farmers and labourers. He did not expect to win in six months, he confessed, nor, indeed, had he expected to push on as far as they had gone during the eighteen months the Land League had been in existence. He then set off for Monaghan with Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and thence hurried to Dublin, where he presided over an important Convention on September 15 and two succeeding days.

His speech at the beginning of the Convention is one of his most important and characteristic utterances. Calm, cool, menacing, full of pregnant matter politely phrased; a speech that anyone could grasp on the moment, and which yet held hidden meanings for the official eye. He expressed the conviction, as he had done before, that they could never settle the question of Irish Self-Government as long as the question of what rent the tenant should pay to the landlord re-

mained in dispute. Now they had this Land Act, and whatever the tenants did with it, let them act unitedly "as a body and as one man." "Avoid isolated action," he urged; "you would be the veriest fools if you allowed yourselves to be scattered now, just as you are entering on a prospect of success. Our principles demand that rent shall be abolished." He then addressed himself to the labourers in passages which illustrate his foresight, and which the course of history has amply vindicated. Take care, he said; the landlords are simulating an interest in the welfare of the labourers which they don't feel, and they have extended many temptations to them to forsake the cause of the farmers. They had manfully, and in face of cruel starvation and sufferings during the last winter, withstood these temptations; they had stood with the farmers, and it was for the farmers to return the benefit to the labourers. He deprecated a separate organisation for the labourers. His advice to them was to join the Land League, but he added, in his most masterful and impressive style, and with that splendid egotism which runs through his whole career: "I pledge myself to them here to-day and to the local branches in their arrangement with respect to labour and the employment of labour throughout the country, if the farmers do not give the labourers fair play, and after we have tried joint organisation between the farmers and labourers, and we find that joint organisation is a failure, I pledge myself to take my stand at the head of a labourers' movement." That settled the matter. All parties concerned knew that in such affairs he was a man of his word. He proceeded to outline his views on the question of the labourers. The labourer should be independent as far as house and garden were concerned of either landlord or farmer. There was no reason why the labourer should be put under the farmer as his slave, as the Land Act proposed—a small piece of land might be given him by the farmer, and he had to hold this as a sort of condition of his labour, and might be removed at any time at the pleasure of the farmer. That was not an arrangement to his liking. What they should try to achieve was the purchase of land in accordance with the requirements of the labour demanded in different parts of Ireland, and that the labourers should be given the opportunity of settling down upon these lands in comfortable houses, which would become their property, and that they should not be tenants to anybody. Parnell was much in advance of his time upon this question at any rate. But he had already conceived the mode in which his views might fructify. They must look forward, he said, to the introduction of the County

Government Bill in the next session or some early session, for the purpose of enabling county boards to be established with power to buy land for the benefit of the labouring population. Next he put his eagle eye on the great grazing tracts. These should be made available for the production of food for the people. Finally, in a passage impregnated with his anti-English virus, he dealt with the then nascent topic of Irish industries. "Protect your industries by an unwritten law," he exclaimed. "The great thing, in my opinion, is to resolve that we shall use no articles of English manufacture whatever. Buy in any other market that you please if you cannot buy in any Irish market, and there are undoubtedly many things which are not provided well in Ireland or which are not produced at all in Ireland. These things we ought to buy anywhere but in England," and, as if the idea pleased him so much that he must see it sinking deeply into their minds, he repeated, "anywhere but in England."

With this stirring, suggestive, statesmanlike speech, he opened the Convention. It was resolved, under his inspiration, that the Land Act should be tested. Cases were to be selected carefully for trial. The Act was to be judged by the fate of these cases under the rent-fixing clauses. On September 26 he attended a Convention at Maryborough, and here the "test cases" were further defined. They were to be cases, not of the most rack-rented tenants, but of tenants whose rents had not been considered exorbitant. Parnell added to the resolution, with his own hand, that pending the result of the test cases, no member of the League should apply to the court to fix his rent without having consulted, and obtained the consent of, the branch of the Land League of which he was a member.

Even thus early in the autumn campaign Forster was itching to have Parnell under lock and key. At this moment he was suggesting his arrest to Gladstone. Nothing could more clearly prove the hollowness of the pretence that the Coercion Act was designed for "village ruffians." It is not improbable that the Irish leader was kept informed of these promptings, but he pursued the even tenour of his way.

The night before the Convention at Maryborough he had been the centre of a demonstration in the streets of Dublin for which there was no parallel since the days of the Liberator. Arriving at Harcourt Street Terminus from Avondale, he was met by a gigantic concourse, with bands, banners, and torches. So vast was the gathering that a procession could not be marshalled properly, and unfortunately the pas-

sage of the chief through the city was marred by many more or less serious accidents. The carriage to which he was brought had four horses with outriders, but these were soon put aside, and he was dragged by the populace through the streets, as if he were a triumphant conqueror returning in glory from the battlefield. At College Green he brought the procession to a standstill, and raising his splendid, far-reaching, clarion-toned voice to its loudest, pointed to the Bank. He recalled to the huge and eager crowd the memories that filled the noble and historic pile, memories which no Irishman could ever forget, and awakened their hopes of seeing a native Parliament within it once again. From a window of the League Offices, at the end of Upper Sackville Street, he again addressed the people with one of those short, fiery speeches, the art of which he had made peculiarly his own. He told them that the spirit of Ireland, the spirit of the silent martyrs in Kilmainham, the spirit of Davitt, far-off in Portland, would never die. Just ten years later his voice was heard in the self-same place under circumstances tragically different.

He visited Cork and Mallow, and returned to Dublin in the first week of October. He spoke at the League in Dublin on October 7. That was the day arranged by Gladstone for one of those ceremonial demonstrations in which he was always seen to splendid advantage. Leeds as well as Midlothian had elected him at the General Election, and he now visited the capital of Yorkshire to express his thanks in person. There were parades and receptions, drives through miles of crowded streets, banquets, speeches. It was one of the great events of the English political year. Forster, who was now the fully equipped Mephistopheles of the Irish Executive, whispered into the Premier's ear that he should denounce Parnell's action and policy. So warlike had the Quaker Chief Secretary become that he put scarcely a blush upon the object with which he made this malignant proposal. "Parnell's reply to you may be a treasonable outburst," he wrote after Gladstone had delivered the speech. "If the lawyers clearly advise me to that effect, I do not think I can postpone immediate arrest on suspicion of treasonable practices." There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that Forster egged on Gladstone so as to provoke Parnell to incriminate himself. There can be no difficulty in deciding which was the baser and viler conspiracy—that which Forster imagined to exist in the Land League Offices or that which he was weaving at Dublin Castle.

Gladstone yielded with rapture to the temptation. He

said: "He (Parnell) desires to arrest the operation of the Land Act; to stand as Moses stood, between the living and the dead; to stand there, not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague. If it shall appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other, if the law, purged from defect and from any taint of injustice, is still to be repelled and refused" (we shall soon see how these delicious conditions were fulfilled at Belmullet), "and the first conditions of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted."

Parnell's great offence was the selection of the "test cases." In the previous month at Hawarden, Forster interpreted Parnell's action for his chief. Morley says he mentioned "other ugly circumstances." Gladstone then wrote his impression for Forster. "It is quite clear," these are his words, "as you said, that Parnell means to present cases which the Commission must refuse, and then to treat their refusal as showing that they cannot be trusted, and that the Bill has failed." Gladstone had accepted Forster's version. It did not occur to the great universal statesman to wait and see what the result of the first few test cases would be. It would be a nice point to decide whether the hurries or the hesitations of the Grand Old Man were the more undesirable and disadvantageous. It is evident, however, that he had extravagant hopes of the Land Act cutting the tenants away from their leaders. "The better the prospect of the Land Act with their adherents outside the circle of wire-pullers, and with the Irish people, the more bitter will be their hatred, and the more sure will they be to go as far as fear of the people will allow them in keeping up the agitation, which they cannot afford to part with on account of their ulterior ends. All we can do is to turn more and more the masses of their followers." This was blunder upon blunder, for it was a complete misunderstanding of both the people and their leaders, but then all, or almost all, British statesmanship in Ireland has been nothing more or less than an impenitent and invincible ignorance. The real fact was that Parnell's moderation threatened trouble for him with many within the Nationalist ranks, and he had actually to send a telegram to America drawing a robust picture of what the Convention in Dublin meant. Gladstone represented Parnell as afraid of the conciliatory effects of the Land Act upon the people; the truth was that the only people Parnell had the least fear of were those who insisted upon a more extreme policy than he was willing to sanction.

It does not require any special pleading to justify Parnell's plan of test cases for the Land Commissioners. The tenants had won so far through the impregnable strength and unity of the Land League, and before they laid aside that splendid weapon it was in the highest degree imperative that they should know what they had got or were going to get in exchange. Gladstone, in the Commons, had held that the rents of Ireland were on the whole fair, and in the House of Peers it was authoritatively maintained that the Land Act would cause the landlords no money loss whatever. These propositions have been ridiculed by history, but they faced Parnell when he returned to Ireland and was looked to for a lead. If rack-rents were offered to the Commissioners for adjustment, a totally false impression might easily have been conveyed to large numbers of the tenants by the reductions that might have been made upon them. The safest and fairest way surely was to submit cases which would afford a reasonable average upon which the farmers could base a reliable expectation. But, apart from such obviously sensible considerations, why should not the Act be tested in any legal way the leaders and their people wished? Was it not sheer tyranny to say : Here is the Act, you dare not test it according to the advice of those who have won it for you, and whom you have trusted thus far? As well might a solicitor be forbidden to advise a farmer client not to go into the court.

Purblind in all other respects, Forster was correct in supposing that Parnell would not take his denunciation by Gladstone lying down. Two days after the flood of bellicose rhetoric at Leeds the Irish leader spoke at Wexford. The speech was strong and pugnacious, but it should have opened the eyes of a much less inspired statesman than the Seer of Hawarden to some facts of which he seemed oblivious. He reminded the Prime Minister that, though he was now praising Isaac Butt, when Butt proposed the very Act which Gladstone himself had just passed, he had walked cheek by jowl with Disraeli into the division lobby to beat it. "In the opinion of an English statesman," remarked Parnell dryly, "no man is good in Ireland until he is dead and buried and unable to strike a blow for Ireland. Perhaps the day may come when I may get a good word from English statesmen as being a moderate man, after I am dead and buried." As for the sympathies of the Irish people, he pointed out the absolutely patent and undeniable fact that the Government had no moral force behind them in Ireland, that they had to depend on a self-interested and small minority for support, and that England's mission in Ireland had been a failure.

He ridiculed Gladstone as the pretending champion of the rights of every nation except those of the Irish nation, and told the thousands who listened to him and cheered rapturously at his words that he was glad the masquerading knight-errant had been obliged to take off his mask and reveal himself as a man "prepared to carry fire and sword into your homesteads unless you humbly abase yourselves before him and before the landlords of the country." Gladstone used brave words, but they had a ring about them "like the whistle of a schoolboy on his way through a churchyard at night to keep up his courage." In stinging tones he hurled the taunt: "But he does not hold this kind of language with the Boers." He told them, further, that they had gained something, but only a fraction of what they were entitled to demand; that if they threw away their arms, as Grattan disbanded the Volunteers, they would find to their sorrow and destruction, when too late, that they were in the power "of the perfidious and cruel and relentless English enemy." It was his hope that, as a result of their movement, they would see the great words of the English Prime Minister "scattered like chaff before the united and advancing determination of the Irish people to regain for themselves their lost land and their legislative independence." The speech was devoured by the Irish people. It was fine reading, and exactly spoke their mind for them. But it is very hard to smell treason in it, unless indeed Parnell was right, and that Gladstone had in fact assumed to himself the attributes of Jupiter.

Forster, however, found enough in the pronouncement to compass Parnell's arrest. Having arranged with the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland, then acting as one of the Lords Justices, that if the Cabinet consented to the arrest he would telegraph the word "Proceed," he crossed to England on October 11. The Cabinet met on October 12. Parnell came in from Avondale to Dublin that night, and put up at Morrison's Hotel, Dawson Street, intending to go down to a meeting at Naas next morning. He left word that he was to be called at half-past eight o'clock. It is more than likely that he suspected he would never keep his appointment at Kildare. He never did.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A REIGN OF TERROR.

“ To reduce the following of Parnell by drawing away from him all well-inclined men seems to me the key of Irish politics for the moment.” When we are deriding Forster for his political lunacy, we ought to remember that the words just quoted were Gladstone’s summary of the situation in a letter written to the Chief Secretary in the month of September. The Coercion Act had been in force for six months. During these six months the administration of the law had been rigorous, but it gave little indication, stern as it was, of the reign of terror the authorities at Dublin Castle initiated in the closing months of the year. The preparations for the terror were, however, quite unmistakable. Even so trivial an affair as the playing of bands through the streets of Dublin city was deemed worthy of high official cognisance. It was ordered that these raucous but innocuous nuisances should not march and play in the public thoroughfares. Meetings of the Land League were proclaimed and suppressed, and on such occasions there was a tremendous display of police and military force. The city police were all eyes and ears. The country police “ made cases ” on the most trivial pretexts. If a known Leaguer looked hard at a constable, he was hauled before the magistrates. If he looked away from him significantly, he was hauled before them likewise. If a person laughed while passing a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, he was prosecuted. If he whistled in a policeman’s presence, he was prosecuted. If he did not move away fast enough when ordered, he was prosecuted. If he moved away too fast, he was pursued, captured, and had to answer for his offence—whatever it was. This, on the face of it, looks like an amusing exaggeration of the system. It is the bare truth. A lad named Lee was prosecuted for whistling. A lad named Thomas Wall was prosecuted for whistling and using abusive language. He had whistled the well-known air “ Harvey Duff.” “ Do you consider that whistling ‘ Harvey Duff ’ is using abusive language ? ” the complaining constable was asked. “ Yes,” he replied, “ I do ; and I swear it is.” A boy ten years of age was prosecuted under the Whiteboy Act for carrying a lighted torch in the street at Mill Street, County Cork, at two o’clock in the day, and promoting an unlawful meeting. A number of young women of Kilmallock were prosecuted because as a constable passed the group someone said, “ Clifford Lloyd’s pet.” At Carrick-on-Suir

a young man was prosecuted for intimidation at a fair, and the policeman's evidence was that, at the sale of a cow, the prisoner wore "a humbugging sort of a smile." A volume might be filled easily with the record of these petty tyrannies. But they are scarcely worth noticing in view of the acts of violence and gross illegality of which Forster's agents were repeatedly guilty. Some of the most despicable creatures were taken into the service of Dublin Castle and clothed with impunity. They stopped at no excess. Assaults by constabulary at the direction of these special magistrates were of frequent occurrence. Illegal convictions were numerous. One of these special myrmidons was defended on the quaint ground that "he could not be expected to know the law accurately as he was not a lawyer." The County Inspector for County Clare issued a circular, stating that Clifford Lloyd's escort, "even on suspicion of an attempt, should at once use their firearms, to prevent the bare possibility of an attempt on that gentleman's life. If even," the incitement to shoot at sight continued, "they should accidentally commit an error in shooting any person on suspicion of that person being about to commit murder, I shall exonerate them by coming forward and producing this document." This was hanging first and trying afterwards with a vengeance, and one wonders was it really Gladstone's idea of the "good laws and good government" which were to "thin more and more the masses" of Parnell's followers.

It goes without saying that the state of the country grew worse with such administrative anarchy. If people were to be shot dead just upon suspicion, they had little to lose by justifying and forestalling the constabulary marksmen. And with administrative violence the landlords grew more ruthless and exacting. It is a curious and most instructive fact that on the passing of the Coercion Act the number of evictions suddenly jumped from 1,732 to 5,626. These evictions in many cases were carried out with heartless cruelty, and amid a display of force by police, infantry, cavalry, artillery and even bluejackets which could have no object except to drive the harassed peasantry to crime. The inevitable happened. Agrarian outrages increased. "It soon appeared," remarks Morley, "that no miracle had been wrought by either Coercion Act or Land Act." As early as June Forster began to see his mistake: "It is seriously to be thought," was his observation, "whether after the Land Bill is passed I ought not to get out of it all."

Still he kept his agents in motion. Domiciliary visits were a daily routine. The jails became congested. Leaguers, journalists, peasants were packed in, until the Government

had a thousand "suspects" on their hands. It was as plain as a pikestaff that Dublin Castle and the landlords had resolved to have a fight to a finish with the agitation.

Parnell had known that it was impossible for him to keep out of jail much longer. Earlier in the year he had received warnings from what he evidently considered reliable sources. It was then important that he should avoid arrest, and on one occasion he went as far as Paris with that object. He had now arrived at the conclusion that it would be inexpedient to do so again. Mrs. O'Shea was able to learn and communicate to him the secret of the Cabinet. He knew, therefore, on the Wednesday what to expect. After the Council Forster, as arranged, wired "Proceed," and hurried back to Dublin. On Thursday morning, October 13, Mallon, the Police Superintendent, with a comrade, went to Morrison's Hotel shortly after eight o'clock. The boots called Parnell and told him of the visitors. The servants wished to throw the detectives off the scent and smuggle the chief out by a back-door. But Parnell would not hear of it, and Mallon was conducted to the bedroom, where he was dressing. Parnell knew all about his errand, and asked no useless questions. The detective was anxious lest the news should get abroad and a crowd assemble. He requested despatch. Parnell acquiesced, entered a cab with the two officers, and was driven off. At College Green, where he had passed so recently in triumph, several policemen jumped on two cars and drove in front of the cab. In Forster Place, beside the Bank of Ireland, a hundred constables were drawn up in case of emergency. But the passage of the party through the city excited little attention. Such a spectacle was in perfect keeping with the times. Mallon used tell a story that Parnell said to him that when he got Home Rule that officer would probably have to supply him with police for his protection. The story may be true. At half-past nine o'clock Parnell walked in under the brazen snakes coiled above the grim portals of Kilmainham Jail. The chief was under lock and key at last.

On the evening of the Wexford meeting he was asked, by one of his Parliamentary lieutenants, who would take his place in case he was arrested. "Ah," he said, as he quaffed a glass of champagne, "if I am arrested, Captain Moonlight will take my place." The following conversation is said to have passed in the Hall of the Four Courts during the State trials earlier in the year:—"Well, John, what is to be the outcome of all this?" asked the treasurer of the Land League. "I don't know," replied Mallon, the police officer. "I'll tell you," said Egan. "You will get no verdict here. Then

you will suppress the League, and try to manufacture some way of effecting the imprisonment of the leaders of the people. And then you may look out." These prophesies were fulfilled to the letter. The fact is that, bad as was the state of the country, the only controlling influence in existence was that of Parnell and his comrades.

The news of Parnell's arrest was hailed with almost inexplicable delight in England. Gladstone secured salvoes of cheers by making the announcement himself in a speech at the London Guild hall, and Forster went on a regular rake's progress, abolishing all vestiges of constitutional liberty in Ireland, and making an orgy of suppression and oppression, the very violence of which was certain to defeat its ostensible object. The story of this hateful period does not properly come within the scope of my narrative, but a few of its most tragic episodes may be described.

Mr. Thomas Sexton, M.P., and Mr. J. P. Quinn, an official of the League, were arrested on October 14. Next morning Mr. James O'Kelly, M.P., and Mr. William O'Brien, the editor of *United Ireland*, were arrested, and in view of what follows, it is important to emphasise the fact that all these arrests, and, in fact, the hundreds of arrests made all over the country, were effected without difficulty, resistance, or disturbance of any kind whatever. The "suspects" made no trouble for the officers of the law. The warrants were served quietly, accepted without question, and the prisoners at once accompanied the various officers to the appointed places of imprisonment. It is evident that, indignant as were the people to find their friends incarcerated wholesale without even the pretence of a trial, they were sensible enough to accept the inevitable without disorderly manifestations.

What happened in the city of Dublin on October 15 is, therefore, open to the most sinister interpretation. Detectives held a warrant for the arrest of Mr. John Dillon, who had already been in jail, and only recently set at liberty. They could have executed the warrant as quietly and as readily as in the case of Davitt, Sexton, O'Kelly, or any of the others. The authorities in Dublin Castle did not elect to pursue ordinary methods this time. Early in the afternoon, when there was to be a meeting of the Executive of the Land League in the Imperial Hotel, bodies of policemen were marched into Lower Sackville Street. They were placed outside the hotel and along the footpath at the opposite side of the street. It did not require any penetration to guess what was afoot, and as there was a good deal of very natural

excitement in the city, the sudden eruption of force attracted a crowd of sightseers. Superintendent Mallon was seen to enter the hotel. He asked if Mr. Dillon were on the premises, and was assured not. When he emerged again there was slight groaning, but no violence. Meanwhile an extraordinary spectacle was witnessed in the spacious thoroughfare, perhaps the finest of its kind in Europe. One of the chiefs of police, a Colonel Conolly, who wore the Victoria Cross, spurred down with a troop of mounted constabulary, who galloped up and down on their prancing steeds. A troop of dragoons, with bugles sounding, were simultaneously parading the line of quays along the Liffey. Constabulary with shotted rifles were seen at other points. The ordinary metropolitan police were assembled in large numbers. If an armed outbreak by the citizens had been announced the authorities could have done little more to demonstrate their preparedness. Under the circumstances, the only effect of the display could be to gather and excite the populace, who had no more idea of revolution than the man in the moon. Curiously enough, at the very time when this large and varied force was demonstrating in the streets Forster, unaccompanied, walked down Dame Street and College Green from the Castle without being noticed or molested.

When Mallon found that Mr. Dillon was not at the hotel he repaired to his residence in North Great George's Street, and there found him, about four o'clock in the afternoon. His business was apparent, and Mr. Dillon submitted to the warrant, as in the other cases, with courtesy and promptitude. He asked ten minutes' grace to settle up some affairs, and Mallon said in that case an escort would have to be requisitioned. Mr. Dillon acquiesced. The crowd in Sackville Street, orderly but eager, and excited by the cavorting of the horse police and the manœuvring of the other forces, had noticed some cabs being driven to Mr. Dillon's residence, and they surmised that the authorities had arranged the imposing display in the great central thoroughfare to throw them off the scent while Mr. Dillon was being taken to jail. Accordingly, a rush was made for the house, and when Mallon emerged with his prisoner there was great cheering from a considerable assembly, and someone very foolishly shouted, "Let us take him away." There was a rush for the vehicle, but Mr. Dillon instantly checked and stopped the proceeding. This was the first and only hostile act on the part of the populace. Mr. Dillon was driven away quickly to Kilmainham. The arrest, about which the Castle authorities had created such stupendous fuss, was effected

without the slightest difficulty or mishap. Mallon, single-handed, could have apprehended Mr. Dillon any time without the smallest fear of untoward results. Unfortunately, the extraordinary action of the officials of the Castle did not end when the prisoner had been locked up.

All during the afternoon policemen had been acting roughly towards people on the footways. In isolated cases, men were beaten and kicked by constables. Still, all might have been well. The purpose of the day had been accomplished, although with a maximum of aggression, and the police might have been withdrawn to barracks. But dusk fell soon on that sad autumn day, and with darkness came a scene of brutality by the forces of the Crown such as one would scarcely believe possible in a civilised country, but of which there cannot be entertained the slightest doubt. Sightseers gather sightseers in a city; the merely curious are the most tenacious of crowds. The streets were still filled. The superintendents of police suddenly withdrew the men, and placed them in ambush. Had they been withdrawn before dark the city would probably have resumed its normal quietude. They were now taken off when large assemblages had gathered, and these assemblages were left in sole possession of the highways. There was no disturbance. In every large city there is a rowdy element, but though there was a good deal of shouting, cheering and speech-making, there was no violence or serious disorder. A few isolated policemen received unmannerly attentions from some of the crowd, but only one of them was in any way seriously injured, and he had to take refuge in a tramcar. Up to ten o'clock that night this completed the offence of the populace.

The chiefs of the police evidently decided that the hour had arrived for action. Without further provocation and without any warning, all the constables of the city were marched against the crowds. They charged upon the people with their bludgeons, beating everyone within reach without mercy or discrimination. Baton and boots were used by these powerful men against men, women and children. Spectators, whose only offence was rash curiosity, were knocked down, thrashed while on the ground, and, in one case, a man was actually jumped upon deliberately by a constable. For two hours the people were rounded up and savaged without respite or mitigation. People going about their lawful business, making their way home from the theatre, were set upon by police, and bludgeoned within an inch of their lives. The hospitals were soon full of the wounded. Only when the exasperation had reached a pitch

of almost hellish intensity did any of the crowd assume a defiant attitude, but then the ruthless havoc of the authorities had done its work and the streets were almost deserted. Next night this fearful work was repeated. It was a Sunday night, when the streets of the city were thronged with promenaders, and the events of the previous bloody night did not deter the people from coming out of doors. Again, batons were freely used and unmerciful assaults perpetrated upon men and women, old and young alike. No provocation whatever seems to have been given for the violence. There is reliable testimony for the statement that numbers of the police were in a state of semi-intoxication when the battue began, and it was noted that only two officers were able to exercise any control and impose any restraint on their men. One officer was heard urging his subordinates to "wire into them," and unoffending citizens who had been assaulted, and were so ill-advised as to go to police stations to complain, were treated as their foolish confidence and innocent injudiciousness perhaps deserved. Next night these discreditable proceedings were repeated. The police were again brought into the streets in great numbers, and when a large crowd had been attracted, as crowds will be in spite of all risks, they were withdrawn. With their disappearance the streets became quiet. A curious incident served as excuse for their reappearance. A policeman was seen to walk rapidly to Sackville Street. His demeanour attracted notice, and a small crowd followed him. He ran round the statue of Sir John Grey, apparently without any cause, unless he was under the influence of drink. He loosened his belt as he went along, and jumped upon a passing tramcar, having, like a madman, thrown off his overcoat and helmet. On the instant a body of police sallied out from Prince's Street and began the attack. The streets were perfectly quiet, but for the extraordinary incident just noted. Again, a merciless and indiscriminate savaging of the people took place.

But perhaps the most remarkable performance of the authorities was that witnessed the following night—the fourth of the orgie. The hooligan element had so far been absent from the scene, but their time had come. Seeing the police so busy with respectable, inoffensive citizens, pedestrians going about their lawful affairs, and imprudent sightseers, the classes whose best chances are in such occasions came forth. Windows were smashed, riot and some looting took place. Respectable folk were assailed by the corner-boys and thieves and hunted with showers of stones. Depredations went on here, there, everywhere. But while on other

nights the whole police force was mobilised in the streets, on this occasion not a single constable was anywhere to be seen. A police constable who refused to act in the course of the horrid work afterwards swore that one of the officers said in his hearing, "It was better to let them work away to-night and the public would ask where were the police." When the mob had been allowed to revel for more than two hours, the police were brought from their barracks, and now the miracle was witnessed of this same force which had acted the mad, savage, brutal part of the previous nights doing their duty with discretion and discrimination—picking out the hooligans from the inoffensive, and using no unnecessary violence. Batons were not used that night, and quiet was quickly restored.

The details which were given of the violence of the police are positively sickening. The highest municipal dignitaries described their conduct in unmeasured terms. A Conservative and anti-Nationalist newspaper of Dublin stated that "their conduct was such as to appear almost incredible to all who had not been to witness it." "No quarter was given," said the same journal, "during the scene of barbarity"; and as to justification, it added: "Some few of the people threw stones, of which fact the broken gas-lamps bear testimony; but, with this exception, no resistance was offered. Gentlemen and respectable working men returning homewards from theatres or the houses of friends fell victims to the attack—unoffending passersby were knocked down and kicked. When the people were felled, they were kicked on the ground, and when they again rose, they were again knocked down by any constable who met them." It is just possible that but for the fact that many stout supporters of Forster were belaboured by the furious constabulary the attacks would have been even more prolonged. When Forster was remonstrated with by a deputation from the Corporation of the City, he made the excuse that the authorities had had reason to apprehend a riot—for which not the slightest scintilla of justification was ever furnished—and the gentle old Liberal added: "It cannot be altogether a milk-and-water business clearing streets."

That the police narrowly escaped a terrible retribution was not known for many years afterwards, but appears to be the fact. Amongst those who testified to the crime committed on the people was Mallon, the Superintendent of the Detective Department: "The D.M.P.," he wrote to Mr. Fred Bussy, "behaved badly, and used unnecessary violence in Sackville Street the night John Dillon was arrested. Twenty

men, with a revolver each, left a publichouse in the vicinity to shoot the police, and were prevented by a man who was afterwards on the Invincible Committee." And Mr. Bussy himself states that he was well aware that most of the constables had changed uniforms before leaving barracks, "so that they could not be identified in case of accidents, or should at least be able to prove an *alibi* in the event of being summoned according to their numbers," and that, when Colonel Talbot, who was in command, addressed them, saying there had been sufficient violence, and that he would have no more of it, and ordered them to put up their batons, he saw many of them, instead of placing the weapons in their coat-tail pockets, putting them up their sleeves, "so that a seemingly innocent bang with the forearm would become as momentous as the kick of a mule."

The other episode, which it is unnecessary to delay upon, was of a more dreadful character. In the month of November a body of police under a sub-inspector marched to a lonely place called Grawhill, about seven miles from Belmullet, in County Mayo. They were an escort for a summons-server, who was about to serve processes for the poor rate upon tenants of a Mr. Blake. The police marched out armed to the teeth with rifles, bayonets, and a special supply of ball cartridges and buckshot. The process-server had acted previously in the neighbouring districts without suffering injury, so that it is a mystery why this formidable array of armed men was sent on this occasion. It is both interesting and important in this connection to quote a minute of the Viceroy to the Premier: "I may here notice," he wrote, that complaint has been made of the troops being exposed to stoning without being allowed to act in return. A certain amount of this may be unavoidable, but troops, in my opinion, should never be brought face to face with the mob unless they are intended to act. It is not fair for the troops and it diminishes the moral effect upon the people. The police should, if possible, be employed in preference, as they can use their batons, which they are not afraid to use, and which inflict just the right sort of chastisement." The disingenuousness of these observations is apparent from the fact, of which neither Viceroy nor Premier was ignorant, that the Irish Constabulary were armed with rifles and bayonets. When the police reached the place where the wretched tenants lived they had to ascend a boreen, and the people, to the number of some hundreds, to whom the visitation of such a formidable force was a startling surprise, assembled in the fields at either side. At last one of the peasants inquired what the police

had come for. There is every reason to believe that there was no hostile intent against the constabulary. A little boy behind the ditch threw a stone. That was all the provocation given for the slaughter that followed. A policeman pursued and caught him, and brought him back to the road. He was treated with brutal severity, and his brother, an idiot boy, with the mad affection which often characterises such afflicted creatures, rushed to his brother's aid. He, too, was seized, and then another brother entered the *melee*. There were shouts from the onlookers of "Don't kill them." The sub-inspector of constabulary instantly gave the order to fix bayonets and charge. The order was obeyed with almost fiendish zest. Everyone reached by the police—man or woman, boy or girl—was stabbed with the cold steel. After thus charging for a hundred and fifty yards they reformed, and the still unsatisfied officer gave the order to fire. There seems to have been some slight stone-throwing after the constabulary had begun their murderous attack. The hillside rang with their volleys. The bullets whizzed into the backs of the flying peasants, and many of them dragged themselves wounded and in terror to the mountains, out of reach of the furious officers of the peace. A feeble old woman and a young girl were killed, one of them by a bayonet. The number of the wounded could not be known, for they hid in the hills, and some of them were later induced with difficulty to come forth and have their injuries attended to by a doctor sent out by the authorities. Of course, the police could not leave the scene without prisoners. Those who could not hasten or crawl to hiding were arrested, handcuffed, and, though suffering from wounds, carried in this fashion to the jail in Castlebar. The police entered the house of one of the women killed, and dragged out a poor boy who was sitting within, supposing that he had been with the crowd and had rushed home. But the poor fellow was stone blind, and he was hauled to the road and treated as harshly as the other prisoners until his affliction became apparent to the heedless and infuriated captors. A brother of the girl who was fatally bayoneted went to her help, as she was lying on the ground, and while he stood over his stricken sister in the act of filial devotion, was stabbed twice in the thigh by the chivalrous constabulary. Only three of the large police force had received any injuries at all—one of them was rendered slightly lame, another received a blow on the chest; the wood of another man's rifle was broken by the blow of a stone. These were the crimes that justified the massacre, for surely it merits that name.

A scene of heartrending anguish was witnessed when, prior to the inquest, the doctor had made his *post-mortem* examination upon the body of the girl. When the result of the examination was disclosed, the mother of the slain came forth, and flinging herself on her knees, uttered this excruciating prayer : " Up to this I believed my daughter to have been shot, and I could almost forgive the man who did it in the hope that he did not intend it ; but now that I find she was cruelly stabbed by a monster who once had a mother, and who still mayhap have a wife or a sister, O God, forgive him if You can, for I cannot."

And now came disclosures which heightened the infamy of the outrage. The total sum of the rates involved was but two pounds and five pence. The landlord had not paid it because he had lately been receiving no rent. There were only five summonses in question, and the rate collector, himself a land agent, had taken no proceedings to compel the landlord to pay. There was at least a doubt whether one of the tenants to be served with a process was not long since actually dead. Such was the careful, equitable, and conscientious administration of the law by which Gladstone and Forster hoped to wean the people from their allegiance to Parnell.

The attitude of the Crown at the inquest on the victims was little calculated to assuage the feelings that had been aroused. Quibbling and obstruction were played upon the coroner, but a verdict of wilful murder was delivered against the police, and thirty years after the dreadful occurrence that verdict is likely to be endorsed by every right-thinking reader. The only excuse for the slayers is that afforded by an English journalist, who has placed it on record that "most of the uniformed band had bottles with them when they set out on their mission. I and another correspondent found the 'empties' along the line of march." And, as a matter of fact, during the affray one of them dropped out of his pocket a bottle containing poteen, and it was produced at the inquest.

Other lamentable occurrences dimmed the memory of this official atrocity, but six years later, when another ghastly episode in which the Royal Irish Constabulary figured, revolted the conscience of England, the public were treated to the painfully instructive spectacle of Mr. Arthur Balfour shouting "Remember Belmullet!" in reply to Mr. Gladstone's incriminatory watchword, "Remember Mitchelstown!"

Such were the measures taken by the administration to abate agrarian outrage. But violence begets violence. Mr.

John Bright a year before had told his constituents that "force is not a remedy"; he possibly reconciled himself to such exhibitions of ruthlessness for their preventive efficacy. But the results proved that it was neither a prevention nor a remedy, but an exasperation. It was while these atrocities were being done by the police under the ægis of a Premier, who had included Italy and the Balkans in his humanitarian manifestations, that the fiendish assassination club known as the Invincibles was established. Dublin, which witnessed the shocking scenes I have described, was shortly to be the scene of the operations of a gang of murderers who marked the chief instruments of the government in Ireland as their special victims. Nor is it possible to forbear adding that when the agrarian murders which sully the history of Ireland in those years are censured, the shambles of Belmullet, the evictions, pauperisation, the shakedown in the workhouse, the horrid bunk in the emigrant ship, cannot be left out of account in mitigation of the crimes of a harassed peasantry. Dublin Castle during the coercion years was a pantechicon of extenuating circumstances.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FAMOUS TREATY,

"IF the restraining influence of the Central Body (of the Land League) were withdrawn, and the local branches driven to become secret societies, crime, particularly assassination, might increase; for though the Central Body gives unity and strength to the movement it does, to a certain extent, restrain crime." So the Lord Lieutenant wrote to the Cabinet. But the Cabinet determined to withdraw that and every other restraining influence. The only policy the Government of all the liberal talents and principles could evolve was random arrest and implacable suppression. They tied down the safety valves.

All the leaders of the people, except a few, who managed to elude the vigilance of the police, were in jail. Early in the year Mr. Patrick Egan had gone to Paris to conduct thence the financial affairs of the Land League, and Parnell had presided over a meeting of the Executive held in February in the French capital. The Government now suppressed the League by public proclamation. A counter-proclamation was

issued by the League. The people were advised not to hold public meetings, to preserve a firm, unbroken, passive resistance, in view of the armed forces brought against them, and to do nothing that could give the authorities a chance "to carry out their designs."

The leaders proceeded to commit their first and only blunder. They managed to issue from Kilmainham Jail a "No Rent" Manifesto. There is no doubt that Parnell had acted all along as a moderating influence. He was the only check upon the extremists. When Davitt proposed a general strike against rent, he did not fall in with the notion. He had intended to give the Land Act a fair trial. He was one of the earliest callers at the offices of the Land Commission to set cases in motion. But the Government had clearly placed him at a grave disadvantage. The national organisation was pronounced illegal. To hold Land League meetings was a dangerous venture. All the spokesmen of the movement with few exceptions were in jail. Those still free could not set foot in Ireland. But there was no excuse for the blunder. The tenants were called upon to pay no rent until the Government desisted from repression. The risks of this decision were foreseen. The Manifesto was published, although the overwhelming arguments against it were fully recognised. Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Kelly opposed it. Parnell was between the devil and the deep sea. He did not like the Manifesto, but it was one of the few occasions upon which he hesitated to follow his own inclination and impose his will on his followers—one of the few occasions when he did not lead. His excuse is that the Manifesto was urged upon him from America, now in a sense the financial mainstay of the movement. Ford, of the *Irish World*, almost demanded of Egan that a strike against rent should be immediately decreed. Egan informed Parnell. His difficulty was Irish-America. The fatal objection to the Manifesto was that the Catholic priests could not support it. It was a barefaced, uncompromising, wholesale repudiation of debt. They were bound to discountenance such a violation of moral obligations. Parnell saw how serious was the objection. He had the paper re-read and re-considered. He, however, did not take sides. He put the question to a vote. It was resolved to issue the document.

What had been foreseen happened. Archbishop Croke, of Cashel, gave the Manifesto its death-blow. He dissented publicly from its advice in a letter—spirited, manly, sensible, unanswerable. Mr. Patrick Egan did essay the impossible task of reply, but the *Freeman's Journal* made it plain that

the Archbishop had its support. Everybody admits that the Manifesto was a *fiasco*.

The prison life of Parnell requires small space in his biography. He was well treated, and acknowledged it; but at this period the Irish Executive was subject to spasms of panic. He himself tells us that at one time he was so indifferently watched that the gate of the exercise yard was left open, without a single warder on guard, and the only obstacle between him and liberty was a wall, over which he could have vaulted easily. Yet at another moment the falling of a tin-can within the prison precincts was sufficient to have the guard called out, and to set eyes, ears, and arms into all the nooks and crannies of the jail. He played at chess in the central hall with another suspect proficient in the classic pastime, but he was not an expert, though keen on his moves. He also played with Mr. O'Kelly at the fine old game of handball, but no handball player would have mistaken him for an adept. He was not of the build specially suited to the game. He also worked at carpentry, under the tuition of an artisan named O'Halloran, a political prisoner who shared his captivity. Despite these diversions and exercises, there can be little doubt that the half year he spent in prison was injurious to his health, perhaps also to his will-power. Shortly after his release Mr. Timothy Healy was heard to say with bitterness: "They have broken another great Irishman." At any rate, there was never another campaign like that of 1881.

Almost from the day he was arrested he was in correspondence with Mrs. O'Shea, for he contrived to find friendly hands to convey missives to and from the prison in such a way that they were unlikely to fall under official eyes. These letters—some of his, at any rate—have been published since his death. They do not enhance his reputation. They are stained with puerilities, which seem to indicate a strange, inward lack of that dignity with which he clothed himself in public, and an almost total absence of a sense of the desperate gravity of his circumstances. One tolerates the infantile simplicities of Swift's correspondence, for they are in keeping with the freshness of his charmer, Stella, but prattling endearments are sickening in a callous and guilty amour. Nor are these documents altogether creditable to the political fame of the great leader. In a letter towards the close of his incarceration he almost whines because he was ill-advised enough to have placed himself in the way of arrest. "I was dragged into that Kildare engagement," he wrote. "Until then, I had settled that I should leave Ire-

land after Wexford." "At least I am very glad," he adds, "that the days of platform speeches have gone by and are not likely to return. I cannot describe to you the disgust I always felt with those meetings, knowing as I did how hollow and wanting in solidity everything connected with the movement was. When I was arrested I did not think the movement would have survived a month, but this wretched Government have such a fashion of doing things by halves that it has managed to keep things going in several of the counties up till now. However, next month, when the seeding time comes, will probably see the end of all things, and our speedy release."

It is a hard letter to interpret. That Parnell did not take naturally or even kindly to the platform and public life is understandable enough. It is well known that he had a tough struggle with himself to acquire perfect composure while speaking to audiences. He never did acquire that ease which is falsely said to mark "the born orator." Nor did he ever feel that delight which so often comes from the exhibition of powers won after a hard fight. But the disgust expressed here is a damning reflection on the movement with which he was bound up as leader scarcely ever was before. He would not have been the first political leader who misjudged the cause he was advocating, and miscalculated the forces he was rallying, but he was too practical a thinker, too cautious in action, too clear of vision, to be deceived by the evidence which had accumulated under his eyes during two tremendous years and in two hemispheres. The things, above all others, which most certainly could not be said about the Land League movement were that it is hollow and wanting in solidity. Many censures might be written quite honestly of it, but not these. What, then, did he mean? If these words represented his real, honest, considered judgment, it would be difficult to acquit him of charlatanry. There are several explanations that may be offered. He was a very highly-strung man, and like all men of the kind, liable to painful depressions. In his present circumstances there was nothing to mitigate the violence of any reaction that might come upon him. At such a moment, with the tenants rushing into the Land Court and the No Rent Manifesto a dead-letter, with the organisation banned, the police supreme, the leaders all under lock and key, a man of more robust constitution and less nervous temperament might be pardoned for a temporary despair. Or was it that there were limits to the confidence he reposed in the object of his fatal passion?

After all, there is little of genuine honesty in such intrigues.

They are inherently vicious and degrading, and depend for their impunity upon the success of deception. To judge of a man from such a letter would be just as fair as to judge his character from the way he brushed his hair or curled his moustache.

Another letter of the series falls into the same category. He had evidently received a complaint of some kind from the woman. She was in querulous mood, and anxious about his and her own health. In reply, he offered to resign his seat rather than that her health should be imperilled on his account, and asked her to let him know whether it was safe for her that he should be kept in prison any longer. On the following day he wrote: "I could not very well make any arrangement or enter into any undertaking with Government unless I retired altogether from politics." Such infatuations are the height, depth, and breadth of folly, the very apotheosis of lunacy, the utter negation of commonsense; but even Mrs. O'Shea could not have taken seriously such rhapsodical hallucination. To take the effusion gravely would be to regard Parnell as a very silly man as well as a very infatuated lover. They are not always synonymous. There, however, are the letters, and it must be candidly confessed they are amongst the hardest pills Parnell's biographer has to swallow. It is probably the greatest proof of the extraordinary character of this great man that they do not sensibly alter one's opinion of his pre-eminence or patriotism.

He was interviewed in jail after the issue of the No Rent Manifesto, and, though he probably spoke with his tongue in his cheek, professed to believe that the tenants would, to a great extent, take its advice. He pointed out some very plausible reasons for the belief—that fully one-half of the Irish farmers could not hope to obtain any benefit from the Land Act, even if it should fulfil the expectations of its most sanguine admirers. He said there were 100,000 who had entered into their leases before 1870; dairy farmers and other tenants who had entered into consolidated holdings since the famine of '47, and who had made no improvements of much value, and who had no interest to speak of in their holdings; tenants on great estates belonging to absentee landlords, whose rents were not higher than the standard which would probably be adopted by the court as that of fair rent; small tenants, sunk under arrears to their landlords, and debts due to shopkeepers—these were the factors which he thought might save the face of the Manifesto. But the reasoning did not in all likelihood deceive himself. The Manifesto was not his; it was bad tactics, and it failed inevitably.

At this moment there was a suggestion abroad that a Tenants' Defence Association should be established, and it brought a letter from him to the *Freeman's Journal*, which I quote because of the tribute it pays to the part played by Davitt in the guidance of the land movement. "Michael Davitt," he wrote, "opposed me when two years since I suggested that, for the sake of harmony, the title Tenant Farmers' Defence Association should be added to that of the Land League. I have lived to recognise the wisdom of his judgment." He urged the people to discourage mongrel, reactionary associations; and it is interesting to note that the final passages of the letter were censored in the office of the newspaper "in view of the proclamation of the Government."

In April he was allowed to leave prison on parole to visit his sister, Mrs. Thomson, whose son, a favourite in the Parnell family, was dying at Paris. Young Thomson was a musician. He lived by himself, and worked too hard for his constitution. It appears that his brain was weakened by concentration upon the art to which he dedicated himself wholly. He was ill with fever for some time before his relatives knew of it. The fever went to his head; he died in delirium. Parnell left Kilmainham on April 10. On his way to Paris he called at Eltham. After the funeral he returned there. Captain O'Shea was in the house. An infant daughter, born on February 16, 1882, was dying. Parnell was the reputed father of the child, but it was baptised a Catholic, partly to avert the suspicions of O'Shea. While it lay dying on the night of April 4, Parnell and O'Shea were engaged in the diningroom drawing up the "Kilmainham Treaty." The child died as the morning dawned.

Ireland had gone to the dogs since the imprisonment of the leaders. Murder, disorder, anarchy were the features of the day. After twelve months of coercion, the last state was far worse than the first; and, as the world was to learn only too soon, even far worse than was suspected by Nationalists or Government—for the Invincibles were now on the track of Forster himself, and he was scarcely ever out of their sight. It was plain that things could not be allowed to go on as they were going. Gladstone had left no stone unturned. An Irish Whig member named Errington had been constituted to all intents and purposes British agent at the Vatican, and the author of "Vaticanism" had the almost unspeakable meanness to endeavour to secure the co-operation at Rome of the venerable and saintly Cardinal Newman in "silencing" some members of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland

who delivered "certain sermons, and otherwise express themselves in the way which my inclosures exhibit." Newman probably smiled at the artless manoeuvre. At any rate, he did not lend himself to it, but sent a reply, the delicious subtlety of which must have amply compensated Gladstone for the well-deserved rebuff.

Neither the art of Downing Street nor the violence of Dublin Castle availed. One of the great difficulties of the situation now was the Ladies' Land League, which, under the fierce and courageous leadership of Miss Anna Parnell, and sometimes masquerading under the title of the Prisoners' Families' Aid Society, did the work of the Land League with adequate efficiency. Women were cast into jail, but the Executive hesitated to deal with the new obstacle as they had dealt with the men's organisation. Wholesale imprisonment of women was out of the question. It is doubtful if such an extension of coercion would have received much favour in England. *United Ireland*, too, though suppressed and seized, managed to make its appearance with astonishing regularity—printed in various places across the Channel and smuggled cleverly into Ireland. The truth was, Forster had found an insoluble problem. Some side should yield if society were not to be dissolved. Both sides yielded. Alas! not in the nick of time.

The history of the Kilmainham Treaty is complex, and somewhat obscure. Parnell, Gladstone, O'Shea, Chamberlain, Justin McCarthy, Forster, and Mrs. O'Shea are all involved in it. There is some reason to believe that O'Shea was in communication with Gladstone as early as 1880, but no inference need be strained from the fact. At what period Chamberlain first came into the negotiations it is not easy to ascertain. Morley says, "when the thing came before the Cabinet" Chamberlain had already told Mr. Gladstone that he thought the time opportune for something like a reconciliation with the Irish Party, and he set to work to learn what use "for the public good could be made of Mr. Parnell's changed frame of mind."

We have seen already that Mrs. O'Shea was able to have early information of Cabinet intentions. Now this Cabinet of 1880 and succeeding years, and the short-lived Cabinet of 1885, were the only Cabinets of which Chamberlain was a member, in connection with which he was likely to have any communications with Parnell direct or indirect. Parnell seems to have developed bitter personal animosity towards him. In July, 1888, in the House of Commons, he made the following startling and terrible charge against him:—

“My principal recollection of the right honourable gentleman is that he was always most anxious to betray to us the secrets and counsels of his colleagues in the Cabinet, and to endeavour, while sitting beside those colleagues, and while in consultation with them, to undermine their counsels and their plans in our favour. If this enquiry be extended into these matters—and I see no reason why it should not—I shall be able to make good my words by documentary evidence, which is not forged.” By a most curious coincidence these words were not printed in the official Hansard Report, and Parnell told Sir Henry Lucy he was going to raise the question of their omission in the House. He did not, however, do so.

At any rate, putting surmises aside, the well ascertained facts seem to be these. Crossing from Dublin in April, Parnell met Mr. Justin McCarthy at Willesden Junction. The same evening they discussed Irish affairs, and Parnell said the No Rent Manifesto was practically withdrawn; that the tenants who could pay had paid, and obtained good reductions, so that there remained but the smaller tenants in arrears—about 100,000 in number. If these tenants were evicted on any large scale there would be terrible suffering and more crime. An Arrears Act would restore peace. Next day he repeated this to O'Shea. O'Shea communicated it to Gladstone and Chamberlain, “apparently,” says Mr. Barry O'Brien, “suggesting the feasibility of some arrangement by which the ‘suspects’ might be released and an Arrears Bill passed.” Gladstone wrote a warm and favourable reply, promising to communicate with Forster. Chamberlain also wrote a favourable reply, though not without a rather mean-spirited threat about the possibility of an anti-Irish programme in England, a curious reflection on the censorious law-abiding spirit of his fellow-countrymen. Forster, agreeable as to the arrears, was not willing to let go his hold of Parnell. Cowper says Forster recognised that Parnell would have to be released ultimately on conditions, yet objected to this procedure, but one is tempted to observe that even Forster could not inflict on the Irish leader imprisonment for life. On April 21, as we have seen, Parnell was in collaboration with O'Shea. On April 22 the Cabinet, in the presence of Forster, took up the question. On April 23 Parnell talked over the situation with Mr. Justin McCarthy. He had previously seen O'Shea, and had told him not to mind about the suspects, but to try and get the arrears settled, and the state contribution made not a loan but a gift on compulsion. The great object was to stay evictions.

He was in Kilmainham once more on April 24. He had with him the draft he had drawn up with O'Shea. On April 25 he wrote to Mr. McCarthy enclosing six propositions, which were to be shown to Chamberlain—propositions covering the arrears question, the permanent amendment of the Land Act, the formal withdrawal of the No Rent Manifesto, a campaign to stop outrages, the dropping of the Coercion Act, and government of Ireland "by the same laws as in England." Chamberlain seemed delighted: "I only wish," he said, "it could be published, for the knowledge that the question still under discussion will be treated in this conciliatory spirit would have a great effect on public opinion."

Mrs. O'Shea says Captain O'Shea followed Parnell to Kilmainham "to get from him a letter to his own satisfaction." He considered Parnell so shifty that he could not be relied on to carry out an agreement that was not in writing, and there was to be some arrangement about a modification of the policy of obstruction. But there was a difficulty. Parnell felt certain that in any case the Government would have to release him before long, and the effect of the Treaty upon Irish-American opinion had to be considered. There is no reason to doubt Mrs. O'Shea when she assures us that Parnell was appalled by the intensity of the feelings he had been so largely instrumental in letting loose. He himself could dominate them, but supposing he now disappointed those passionate and destructive feelings, had he nothing to fear from them himself? He put the sinister alternative in a significantly enigmatical way: "Yes, I hold them now with my back to the wall, but if I turn to the Government, I turn my back upon them, and then?" O'Shea returned to England without the letter. Mrs. O'Shea tells us she threw the whole weight of her influence into the scale for peace, and won Parnell's decision. But this story is somewhat spoiled by the undoubtable fact that Parnell, on the very day of his return to prison, had written to McCarthy the conditions intended for the critical eye of Chamberlain.

The letter to O'Shea followed him on April 28. The only new gloss upon the terms is that conveyed in the concluding paragraph: "The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched would in my judgment be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the land question, and would, I feel sure, enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal Party in forwarding Liberal principles; so that the Government at the end of the session would, from the state of the country, feel themselves thoroughly justified in dispensing with further coercive measures." This was going

far, indeed; but if there was to be a Treaty, it might just as well be comprehensive as grudging.

On April 30 O'Shea showed Parnell's letter to Forster. The Cabinet, on the 28th, had heard Chamberlain on the negotiations. It was decided then that Ministers could enter into no agreement, and would give no pledge. Gladstone never liked the suggestion that there was a Treaty. But a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. Morley is candid enough for all practical purposes: "The nature of the proceedings," he writes, "was plain enough."

Forster sent Parnell's letter and a memorandum of his interview with O'Shea to the Premier. Forster's memorandum reeks of Dublin Castle; or, if it be a correct reproduction of O'Shea's words, that gentleman must have taken the most amazing liberties with his language, for it is incredible that Parnell would have put into his mouth such a statement as: "that the conspiracy which has been used to get up boycotting and outrages will now be used to put them down, and that there will be a union with the Liberal Party." O'Shea denied point blank the accuracy of the note, and said that "organisation" was the word he used. But Forster proves himself an unreliable witness, because a moment later, when the word conspiracy recurred, he says distinctly that he is not sure whether agitation was not the phrase used.

Gladstone was delighted. "This is a *hors d'œuvre* which we had no right to expect," he exclaimed. "On the whole, Parnell's letter is, I think, the most extraordinary I ever read. I cannot help feeling indebted to O'Shea." The Cabinet met next day. It goes without saying that this astonishing development of the Irish situation was discussed. Immediately the meeting finished, the Premier wrote to the Lord Lieutenant stating that "in consequence of the altered position of the No Rent Party, further attested to us by important information which (without covenant) we have obtained," the Cabinet had considered the question of the release of the prisoners. The Viceroy was, therefore, warned that a telegram might reach him the following day (May 2) conveying a decision to liberate the hostages.

In view of what followed, it is important to point out that the "new policy" was alive in the public press for many days before this point was reached by the Cabinet. Everybody felt that a radical change was afoot. Even as early as the first week in April the rumours were too thick and circumstantial to be mere figments of the strolling paragraphist. No mere *flaneur* could have risen to the height of such elaborate imagination. The Government on the last day of

March had scored a unique victory. Another closure resolution, an additional preventive of obstruction, was carried by Gladstone against the greatest combination of adversaries it was possible to bring against him, and one publicist pointed to the moment of victory and strength as an appropriate time for benignity. Organs that had the reputation of being inspired in the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees gave currency to the whispers of change. Then came the debate on a Land Bill prepared in Kilmainham, and the Premier assumed an attitude of winsome benevolence which added force to the prevailing suggestions. No statesman could execute a *volt face* with such amazing aplomb, and Irish Nationalists rubbed their eyes and cocked their ears when they heard the old man declare in his most resonant tones that the British Empire was organised on the basis of freedom, and that compulsory government was hostile and alien to the spirit of the constitution. No wonder journalists grew bolder, and hinted that a scheme of Home Rule was in process of incubation. Cowper's resignation had for some time been taken for granted. Lord Spencer's name was generally mentioned for the Viceroyalty. It is curious to note that all the newspapers agreed that Gladstone was most unwilling to part with Forster and that Cowper would be sacrificed for choice, so wide of the mark had those in charge of the rumours begun to roam. Cowper's resignation was publicly announced on April 29, but still it was he who would have to give directions for the release of the suspects.

On May 2 the fateful telegram arrived: "Sign and give necessary directions." Cowper wired back stating that he would obey if ordered, but would prefer that his successor should be the *deus ex machina*. He would give his reasons by letter. The letter went across. It was in the best style of Dublin Castle, overflowing with reasons against clemency or mitigation, or anything but the bad old plan of handcuffs and lock and key. Gladstone was not in a mind to continue such a correspondence. He wired that Cowper's signature would be merely ministerial: "I quite understand your letter, as it shows me, to my surprise, that you have had no previous information." To surprise Gladstone at seventy-three was no bad feat for a member of the House of Lords. But if Cowper was in such blissful ignorance of all that was going on in the political world, what a commentary it is on the whole system of Irish Executive Government.

Gladstone had taken care to prepare the Queen for what was coming. He told her—what an adroit old man he was—that there was no doubt the general opinion of the public was

moving in a direction adverse to arbitrary imprisonment. At the Cabinet, on May 2, he presented his proposals: the release of the prisoners, and a Bill to strengthen the ordinary law in Ireland for the security of life and property, reserving discretion as to the Coercion Act, "which, however, they do not at present think it will be possible to renew if a favourable state of affairs shall prevail in Ireland." Forster alone dissented; he resigned. Cowper took the necessary steps. Parnell, O'Kelly and Dillon left Kilmainham Jail, almost unnoticed, entered a cab, drove to Harcourt Street Terminus, and availing of a handy cattle train, travelled down to Avondale.

That is the story of the famous Treaty of Kilmainham. It is not easily possible to admire too highly the statesmanship of Parnell throughout the affair. Whether the conception was originally his does not materially alter the fact that the construction of the instrument and the mode of its insinuation and promulgation were entirely his work. He controlled the moves from start to finish. He placed Gladstone and the Government in a position from which they could extricate themselves only in one way. They should agree, or stand convicted of sheer malevolence. He knew they could not agree to his proposals and still keep the suspects in prison, and he took special precautions to make it unmistakable that the question of his freedom did not enter into the pourparlers and compact. Finally, at a moment not without grave peril for the whole movement, he secured concessions of the greatest value, which had all the appearance and much of the substance of complete and sweeping victory. The Nationalists of the country were thrown into a state of exultant jubilation. At any rate, coercion had been baffled and beaten, and Forster, its high priest, had been evicted from his sanctum.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR.

WHEN Parnell reached Avondale he was welcomed by the retainers of his family with touching marks of affection. He himself was calm, unmoved, to outward appearance indifferent. "Those who were nearest to him liked him best," says a historian. His sister, Mrs. Dickinson, was present. "I thought they would never let you back again," she said, "I thought they would hang you." "Well," he replied

smiling, "it may come to that." He crossed over to London immediately, and, to the cheers of his followers, entered the House of Commons just after Forster had begun the explanation usual on such occasions. The fallen Minister had no illusions as to the Treaty, and he had a very strong idea that Parnell was the conqueror. "If all England cannot govern the honourable member for Cork," he said, and it was not a sneer, "then let us acknowledge that he is the greatest power in Ireland to-day."

Parnell spoke, and apparently his main purpose was to emphasise the fact that he had made no stipulation regarding the liberation of his friends and himself. The Treaty looked fair enough from both sides. There was secured by Parnell the abandonment of coercion and an Arrears Bill; and by the Government, the aid of the only influence that could quiet the anarchy which reigned over a great part of Ireland. The agitation was to be moderated; outrages were to be stopped, if the leaders could at all stop them. The promise to assist Liberal legislation cropped up later on, and we will have to return to it. Parnell was risking something, but he knew well that the fearful turmoil could not continue much longer. The epidemic of outrage was beginning to unnerve men. We can now see that it was a most natural paroxysm of rage on the part of the victims of an odious system of oppression. Their hunger and harrassment, their miseries and insecurity, the spectacle of the law and Government aiding and abetting the tormentors, had set them in revolt against that state of society which condemned them to such sufferings. It was revolution or nothing: just as much revolution as the upheaval of Paris a century before. And if the outrages which became the expression of the revolution were cruel and horrible, the degrading conditions in which the peasantry had been forced to live were accountable in the main. Their wretched hovels were shared by the pigs, by the beasts of the field, yet they were expected to be nice in their adjustment of retribution. Whether his imprisonment had somewhat unnerved him or not, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Parnell viewed the avalanche of outrage with alarm. He also seems to have had a wholesome respect for the will-power, the resourcefulness, and the determination of Gladstone. He regarded him as a very dangerous antagonist. At any rate, each of these great men had yielded something, and the prospect seemed almost miraculously bright. Gladstone had made up his mind to cut away from the old method. "I have no choice," he wrote to Forster; "followed or not followed, I must go on." The Queen he comforted with the

assurance that the Irish leaders were conscious of having been defeated by the Land Act on the chief question—that of paying rent. Gladstone was easily able to believe what he wished to believe. Ireland was convinced that Parnell had won the momentous battle.

In an interview, intended primarily for Irish-American consumption, the Irish leader tried to minimise his concessions. He denied, and technically he was right, that there was any understanding about the withdrawal of the No Rent Manifesto, and with less correctitude, declared that he thought it had accomplished its purpose. He was fully conscious of the sensitiveness of Irish-American opinion as to any weakening of agitation.

Lord Spencer was the new Viceroy. Lord Frederick Cavendish was appointed Chief Secretary. He was a scion of the powerful house of Devonshire, a brother of the Marquis of Hartington, and related to Gladstone by marriage. He had just formed a plan of finance for a new scheme of Irish land purchase, and this was the principal reason for his appointment. These were the two statesmen specially charged to inaugurate what promised to be an era of good government, of progress, amelioration, and pacification in this unhappy country. Simultaneously with their appointment, the Government announced that Michael Davitt would be released from Portland.

On the night of May 5 a great torchlight procession marched through Dublin celebrating the release of Parnell and Davitt. It was an impressive and orderly display. Some police did act injudiciously and aggressively while seizing an emblem carried in ridicule of "Buckshot" Forster. The incident did not, however, lead to disturbance. They also instituted a set of wanton and silly prosecutions for bonfire lighting during the night in various parts of the city. But, indeed, May 6 dawned without a cloud. It was the day of the state entry of the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Frederick Cavendish was in the pageant. The Lord Mayor welcomed the Viceroy. His progress through the city was pleasant and gratifying. Everybody felt that good and quiet times had come, that a nightmare had been driven from the land. No Viceroy in recent years had been received with so much general cordiality.

After the state procession had passed along Dame Street to the Castle a gang of assassins who were the chief members of the Invincibles, a murder club formed the previous year, met in a publichouse facing the gates of the Lower Castle Yard, and there concluded arrangements for the slaying of Mr.

Thomas Henry Burke, the Under-Secretary, that same evening. The previous evening, May 5, they had waited for Mr. Burke at Parkgate Street side of Kingsbridge, but they did not chance upon him. They waited for him the following morning on the quays at the same place. Again they missed him. They had been similarly dogging Forster for months past before he left Ireland. He had no less than nineteen miraculous escapes, the last of them on the very day of his departure. After Forster had eluded them, they concentrated their horrible attentions on Mr. Burke. The authorities seem to have known of the existence of an assassin gang in Dublin, yet the precautions taken were strangely cursory. When the conspiracy was unravelled, it was found that a series of the most haphazard of accidents saved the life of Forster himself.

Between five and six o'clock that beautiful spring day the ruffians left Dublin in two batches for the Phoenix Park. One party drove on an outside car, another in a cab. Isolated members of the gang went on foot. The Phoenix Park was radiant in the sunshine, the foliage fresh after a light shower. The Polo Ground was surrounded with people watching eagerly the game, then new to Dublin. There were the customary strollers all over the superb pleasure grounds, people occupied the seats, cars and cyclists were using the spacious roads. It seemed the most unlikely setting for a ghastly tragedy.

Reaching the Park by different routes, the desperadoes separated into groups. Two of them—one of whom was the infamous James Carey—remained near the Polo Ground at the Nine Acres. The other was named Smith, an employee of the Board of Works at the Castle itself, and the only one of the gang acquainted with the appearance of the Under-Secretary. He had been brought to point out the victim to Carey, who was to give the signal to the actual assassins. Higher up the main road, on the footpath along the left-hand side, and directly opposite the Viceregal Lodge, the main body of the murderers assembled. The car waited on Carey. The cab pulled up near the other group. Carey filled in the time watching the polo match, and Lord Spencer, riding home from town, actually stayed and watched the game too.

There was no attempt at disguise on the part of the ruffians. They were seen and spoken to by many acquaintances. They seemed to court publicity. Carey spoke to a Mr. Glynn for a full quarter of an hour. The carman, Kavanagh, hailed another carman as he drove along the Park Road. Some of

the assassins while lying on the grass opposite the Viceregal Lodge nodded to men passing whom they knew. It was broad daylight. The sentry paced up and down in front of the Viceroy's residence, a few hundred yards away. The conspirators took no precautions whatever beyond carrying loaded revolvers to make good their escape, and none whatever to escape detection after the foul deed was done. Alas! the Castle authorities were even more careless. Here was real police work to be done, and the force which was so violently active when the public agitation was to be bludgeoned was nowhere when the secret murder club came out with an audacity which takes the breath away—without disguise, without any ingenious precautions or plans of any kind whatever—to kill down the chief permanent official of the Irish Executive.

The gang had a fair knowledge of Mr. Burke's routine. They expected him some time after six o'clock. Lord Spencer, before leaving the Castle, had invited Lord Frederick Cavendish to drive home in his carriage, but as he had not quite finished his work he refused, saying he preferred to walk out through the Park, where the Under-Secretary's Lodge also stands. He was engaged with Mr. Burke all the afternoon. Shortly after six he left the Castle, walked along the bank of the Liffey, and entered the Phoenix Park. Mr. Burke was detained a little longer. He, too, walked along the quays. In Parkgate Street he spoke to a messenger employed in the Castle, crossed to a hackney coach hazard, got on an outside car, and drove through the Park Gates towards his residence.

A short distance beyond the great equestrian statue of Lord Gough he saw Lord Frederick walking along the left-hand footpath. He stopped the car, paid the driver, got down, and joined his colleague. The two linked and strolled along towards their residences, which are close together.

The fell tragedy had already begun. Carey and Smith, with Kavanagh's car in waiting, were sitting on a seat at the opposite side of the road. Smith warned Carey that Burke was coming. The two conspirators got upon the car, and drove up in front of the victims. Smith indicated Burke as the man in the grey suit. Carey held a white handkerchief in his hand to announce his approach. The two parties joined. Carey was told to send Smith away. He did. He told the gang how to know Burke. He was sent away himself. Seven assassins remained for the butchery.

It was seventeen minutes past seven o'clock when Carey left the footpath, took to the grass, and hastened towards

Island Bridge Gate. The assassins ranged themselves in a line of three, followed by two couples, and walked down to meet the unsuspecting pair coming on in animated conversation. Two tricycle riders passed, and the two gentlemen seemed to be speaking about them and their machines. At the Phoenix Column, a few hundred yards away, a lieutenant from the neighbouring Magazine Fort was exercising his horse and dogs. A car with a passenger was coming down the road. Two bicycle riders were also approaching from the same direction. Everything conspired to throw the victims off their guard. Even the most guilty conscience would have been composed in such genial and diverting surroundings.

The two parties met. At that moment the outside car and passenger passed, and Burke and Cavendish were allowed to walk untouched through the midst of the murderers. There was then a right-about turn. Carey, now some two hundred yards or more away, looked back. He saw the ferocious cut-throat Brady advance to Burke, place his right hand on his shoulder, raise his left hand, for he was a left-handed man, and stab him in the shoulder. It was twenty minutes past seven. A few seconds more finished the hideous slaughter. Burke fell. Cavendish struck at Brady with his umbrella. Brady gashed his arm, followed him out on the road, and stabbed him to death. At that instant right into the middle of the appalling tragedy rode the two bicyclists, but the road was full of stones, they were busy managing their machines, and only took in a more or less hazy idea of what was in progress. One of them at the moment of passing did, however, hear the expression, "Ah! you villain," which formed the most important of all the clues that led subsequently to the vindication of justice. Brady returned to Burke, cut his throat, wiped the knife in the grass, joined three of his comrades already on the car, and drove away by a side road to Chapelizod. Three others entered the cab, and drove back towards town along the main road. It occupied in all just three minutes. It cost Ireland another generation of slavery.

So swift was the butchery that, although many people witnessed it at almost close quarters, not one of the spectators appreciated its horrible significance. The wounds inflicted were of a fearful kind, and did their work at once. The affair had the appearance of horseplay or at most a drunken scuffle. When the onlookers strolled up to the two prone figures they were stupefied at the revolting spectacle. All the assassins by this time had made good their escape. Their audacious unconcern had secured for them safety. They remained at large for nearly a year, in spite of the fact that

there was immediately available, had the police authorities been skilful enough to use it properly, a mass of evidence amply sufficient to connect them with the crime. Before the outrage these authorities had been almost criminally negligent; after its perpetration, they were as clumsy as they had been careless. The killing of Lord Frederick formed no part of the murderous scheme of the assassins. He was led by a cruel fate to a tragedy arranged for his accidental companion alone. Those who can recall the effect which the awful news produced an hour or so later in Dublin when it reached the town are not likely to forget the sensation while they live. It was scarcely credible, yet the time was full of bloody crimes, and the city itself had recently been the scene of some horrid tragedies. An "informer" had been shot dead in a laneway. Two other shooting fatalities, under peculiarly sinister circumstances, had alarmed the citizens, and must have made the police aware of the fact, if indeed they did not know it otherwise, that a secret political society of desperate resolves was alive in the metropolis. These circumstances make the absence of police guards from the Park on the fatal day utterly inexplicable. The citizens for a moment tried to disbelieve the shocking news. But it was only for a moment. Then an amazed horror, the silence of dismay, settled on the people.

The news stirred all Ireland and England to their depths. There was a thrill of passionate resentment across the Channel, but to their credit, the masses of the English people soon recovered their balance. It was the fate of Lord Frederick that most shocked the world. Mr. Burke, as the chief permanent official at Dublin Castle, had naturally incurred odium from the severe coercive methods pursued by the Irish Executive. He had been warned of the existence of plots against his life, but treated the warnings lightly. He seems to have been one of those men so firmly convinced of the rectitude of their motives and the honesty of their actions that they cannot understand how they could possibly be the objects of censure. Mr. Burke thought he was rather entitled to credit for his services, and to the protection of the people against harm and hurt. But it is as certain as anything of the kind can be that the Invincible Society and the outrages that stained the period were the direct outcome of the coercion *régime*, the imprisonment of the popular leaders, and the batoning down of the public agitation. It is not possible to disassociate the establishment of the murder ring in Dublin from the fierce and wanton bludgeonings which had been witnessed in 1881 in the chief streets of the metropolis.

But there was no pause of thought to adjust the perspective of events. Thirty years after the appalling sensation, we may survey the whole period, and arrange details in illuminating sequence. We can turn all sides of the harrowing story, and contemplate it without passion. It may perhaps seem to some that the killing of the two innocent women at Belmullet was in its own way not very much less odious a deed than the killing of the two men in the Phoenix Park. It will, perhaps, also occur to many that if a Government, through its police, goad and brutalise a population by indiscriminate and unjustifiable violence, there is every likelihood of brutal retaliation from coarse, dark natures and fierce and brooding passions such as are found in every large community of men. Nor is it unfair to add that this murderous brotherhood was but a handful of men, and that this crime is the only one of its kind that sullies the history of Ireland. Despite cruel and prolonged misgovernment, which all fair-minded Englishmen now admit, despite sufferings such as have afflicted few nations, Ireland has contributed just one great crime to the prolific annals of political assassination.

But no reflections can minimise the enormity of the outrage. It still sends a shudder through one's frame. At the time, it sickened and paralysed Ireland and enraged Great Britain. Once more, when Ireland's hopes were high and her prospects bright, a vicious fate plunged her into despair.

Parnell, on May 6, went to Weymouth to meet Michael Davitt, who was released from prison about the time the Vice-regal procession was passing through Dublin. The following morning (Sunday) he drove with Mrs. O'Shea to Blackheath Railway Station, intending to go up to London to meet Davitt and some of his Parliamentary colleagues. At the station he purchased the *Sunday Observer*, and glanced through it to see what it contained about Davitt. His eye fell on something in the sheet. Mrs. O'Shea narrates that she noticed suddenly a curious rigidity about his arms, and he stood so absolutely still that she was frightened, and called out, "What is it?" He said, "Look!" and pointed to the headline—"Murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke." His face took on the pallor of death, a painful frown settled across his forehead, he stared vacantly before him, his hand tightened. The train was approaching. She roused him, saying he must see Davitt and the others at once. "I shall resign," he said wearily. "No," she answered; "you are not a coward." He got into the train, reached London, and hastened to Davitt at the Westminster Palace Hotel.

He flung himself into a chair. His splendid and imperturbable composure had forsaken him. He was full of despairful rage. "How can I carry on a public agitation," he exclaimed, "if I am stabbed in the back in this way?" Then he lapsed into silence. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Tim Healy came in. Davitt was in the act of writing out a Manifesto denouncing the crime and the criminals when Mr. Justin McCarthy and other Irish members arrived. Parnell suggested that Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, then in England, should be called upon, induced to re-enter Parliament, and take his place. "The most utter depression prevailed in our little meeting," writes Mr. McCarthy; "the hopes of the Irish cause seemed to be literally blasted. Healy, whom the people think so truculent, felt it so much that he deliberately proposed that we should all resign our seats and go back into obscurity, believing the cause hopeless for our generation on which the shadow of that crime had fallen. I think Parnell leaned towards this counsel. I was, I believe, the first to oppose it. I contended that nothing which happened from the outside would release us from the duty we owed to our constituents and the Irish people, and that we were bound to stand to our posts. Some others were of the same opinion. In the end we all came round to it."

The address was drawn up. It was written with strength. No more powerful denunciation of the outrage was issued; no more earnest expression of the hope that the malefactors would be brought speedily to justice. Parnell, Davitt and Dillon signed the document. Then Parnell and McCarthy sought out some of the leading Liberals. They saw Sir Charles Dilke. He was perfectly cool, said he was "a Home Ruler *quand même*," and that nothing that had happened would deter him from accepting the Chief Secretaryship were it offered to him. Dilke then drew McCarthy aside, and spoke of the unwisdom of allowing Parnell to walk about London that day. They saw Chamberlain next. Chamberlain believing that Parnell had any sympathy with assassination or outrage. Parnell said he did not believe the murder gang in Ireland could muster more than twenty men all told. O'Shea then entered. Chamberlain gave a caution similar to Dilke's. McCarthy suggested to Parnell that they should take a hansom, and hinted the reason. For the first time that sombre morning Parnell showed something of his old spirit. He exclaimed sharply that he would do nothing of the kind; that he had done no wrong to anyone, and intended to walk in the open streets like anyone else. As they walked

along someone called out from the top of an omnibus, "There's Parnell," but they received no further notice.

The Irish leader next had a note sent to Gladstone. It reached the Premier at lunch. It came "through the same channel," says Morley, "by which Mr. Chamberlain had carried on his communications, and read: 'I am authorised by Mr. Parnell to state that if Mr. Gladstone considers it necessary for the maintenance of his (Mr. G.'s) position and for carrying out his views that Mr. Parnell should resign his seat, Mr. Parnell is prepared to do so immediately.' " The Premier replied: "My duty does not permit me for a moment to entertain Mr. Parnell's proposal just conveyed to me by you, that he should, if I think it needful, resign his seat; but I am deeply sensible of the honourable motives by which it has been prompted." To Lord Granville the Premier said: "My opinion is that if Parnell goes, no restraining influence will remain; the scale of outrages will be again enlarged; and no repressive Bill can avail to put it down." Gladstone pronounced Parnell's "conduct in the whole matter very praiseworthy."

That evening as Parnell sat talking gloomily a picture of the House of Commons of 1880 fell off the wall. "There goes Home Rule, Parnell," said one of those present. Parnell took the picture wire in his hand and tried to break it. He did not succeed. "It is an omen," he remarked, "but for whom?"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DAVITT AND PARNELL—THE FIRST RIFT.

PARNELL travelled with Davitt from Weymouth to London on May 6. During the Kilmainham negotiations he had stipulated for Davitt's release. In the course of the interview already quoted he said he desired Davitt's liberation "even for personal reasons, as he would relieve me of an immense deal of responsibility." Chamberlain was the particular Minister who urged the release. When Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Thomas Sexton, and Mr. Tim Healy saw Chamberlain to urge it, he observed: "Of course, I had thought of that: I have already written to Sir William Harcourt to say that Davitt's release is indispensable." It should be mentioned that while he was in prison he had been elected

member for Meath, but was, of course, as yet ineligible to sit in Parliament."

All the way to London Parnell kept deploring the dreadful state of Ireland; "Spoke of anarchy," said Davitt, "as if he were a British Minister bringing in a Coercion Bill." He was especially angry with the Ladies' Land League. They had taken the country out of his hands, and should be suppressed. Davitt defended the ladies; they had kept the ball rolling. "I don't want them to keep the ball rolling any more," the leader snapped out; "the League must be suppressed or I will leave public life." The only thing the tragedy in the Phoenix Park did not touch was the Ladies' Land League. In the excitement and complication that ensued it escaped Parnell's attention for a little while longer.

Davitt was in no way a party to the Kilmainham Treaty, and it is quite certain that he was one of the few Irish leaders who kept their heads cool in the presence of the new catastrophe. While others were talking about retirement, although he joined heart and soul in branding the assassins as they deserved, the idea of slowing up or slowing down the Irish movement does not seem to have entered his mind. Subsequent events showed that he did not at all like the treaty. At one of Henry George's meetings in Manchester over which he presided shortly after his release, he spoke plainly and boldly: "It would be vain for me to think that he (Gladstone) could be guided in his actions by a man like myself, but humble and obscure though my origin be, the son of an Irish peasant, who was refused the shelter of an Irish workhouse by Irish landlordism, the son of an Irish mother who had to beg through the streets of England for bread for me, humble as that origin may be, the memory of that mother has made me swear that so long as I have tongue to speak or head to plan or hand to dare for Ireland, Irish landlordism and English misgovernment in Ireland shall find in me a sleepless and incessant opponent." That spirit was badly needed at the moment.

Parnell managed to pull himself together quickly enough, but there was a very marked difference between him and the leader of 1881. His composure was an effort. There could be little doubt that he felt he was under a cloud. His defiance was tamed. On May 9 he was in the House, and expressed his unqualified detestation of the horrible crime, and his conviction that it was the deed of men who detested the cause with which he was associated; "the deadliest blow in their power to strike against our hopes and against the new course which the Government had commenced." But it was

not the old Parnell who observed: "I do not deny that it may be impossible for the Government to resist and to feel themselves compelled to take some steps or other in the direction indicated by the Prime Minister"—which simply meant a return to coercion. He only uttered a few hundred words; and two days later, when he addressed the House again, after Harcourt had introduced the new Coercion Bill, he only spoke thirty-two lines in regret that the Government had not imitated the temperance of the public opinion of England. He pointed out that Forster's coercive measures had failed, that he was nevertheless recommending more of them, and that it was not fair, because of a crime committed by a few, to place the lives of people at the mercy of partisan and political judges like Lord Chief Justice May. One has only to compare this modest and meagre speech with the bold, intrepid, courageous utterance of Mr. John Dillon the same night to realise the tremendous effect the assassinations had upon the Irish chief.

While Parliament was busy forging the new Coercion Bill and ambling through the Arrears Bill Davitt went into the West of Ireland. There had been many heartless evictions in Connaught that winter and spring, and his tour ran through some of the stricken districts. In some parts—around Recess, for instance—half the population had been thrown on the roadside during the previous five years. Yet English publicists and politicians held up their hands in horror when a landlord was shot. Evictions were still in progress in that cheerless region already so drastically thinned. At Carraroe two hundred families had been expelled from their homes and holdings. Pitiable sights met his gaze. Many of the evicted, having neither house nor home, were sheltering near boulders in the glen; some had been taken in by friends; a few who could not be removed were allowed to remain as caretakers in their hovels. The day Davitt visited this blighted district there was not a single loaf in the whole village of Carraroe. Bread was a luxury to the people of the region. He spoke to them in the Irish language, explained the Arrears Bill, and travelled on to Mayo.

At the meeting in Manchester which I have just mentioned he took a line which was to get him into some trouble in America. He had long since cherished the idea of an alliance or something like it with the democracy of England. There had not been wanting, he observed, generous and justice-loving Englishmen who braved the storm of popular prejudice in defence of the cause of the Land League and its leaders. He desired to stimulate the sympathy of the English artisan

classes, and he made bold to ask should the Irish not endeavour to multiply such advocates in England. It would be easy to accomplish, without any sacrifice of principle or national aspiration; it called for nothing but what it was their moral duty to perform and their best policy to pursue. Let outrage in Ireland cease, he exclaimed, and they would have what he desired—the manly advocacy of fearless English minds and the unsullied sympathy of generous English hearts. It was indeed the first great appeal for what came to be known subsequently as the union of hearts. Parnell had as yet given no sign publicly of such an obeisance to English influence. Davitt was in this as in so many other things a true pioneer.

At length, in Liverpool, on June 6, he gave the first overt cause of offence to Parnell. His pet agrarian hobby—land nationalisation—was the *casus belli*. It appears that Parnell had remonstrated with him upon that theme, and Davitt had so far fallen in with the views of the leader that he refrained from agitating that or any other question in fact during his visit to Ireland. There had been some murmurs of dissatisfaction, principally in America, against the Kilmainham Treaty, and as early as May Davitt had cabled to the *Irish World* firmly expressing his confidence in Parnell and his motives, and he had taken other opportunities in the same direction. But at Liverpool he took his courage in both hands and, after another appeal for English sympathy, announced that he was going to undertake a task which ought to have been undertaken long before. He essayed to define what he called “the charter cry of the Land League”—the now famous shibboleth, “the land for the people.” He knew the consequences. In doing this, he said, he would lay himself open to the suspicion of differing from Mr. Parnell and most of his colleagues in the movement; but the fact was, he contended, that there was not a particle more of difference between Parnell and himself upon the question than there was when they first stood upon a public platform together at Westport three years before. Davitt doubtless believed this, but he was very far from the truth, as he must have come to see quite clearly long before he made his final unavailing effort a quarter of a century later to commend his cherished scheme to the tenant-farmers of Ireland. What is more, the Land League would never have been the success it was had anybody but himself at Westport fancied that land nationalisation was in the programme of the new movement. Upon this point, beyond all question, Parnell was a truer exponent of Irish opinion.

At all events, Davitt went on to expound his view. The State was to be simply the steward of the national property for the use of that property, and for the protection that would be given to the farmers and labourers who worked it, from the confiscation of their interest, a tax of, say, 10 per cent. upon the estimated annual production would be levied. The crudity of his ideas, though painfully obvious to all other men, is often rather their strongest recommendation to the true idealist, and Davitt was an idealist from the cradle to the grave. He went on to say that to make the land of Ireland or any country national property would simply be a resumption of that State ownership of the soil which obtained amongst all nations anterior to the system of land monopoly which class government had established for the aggrandisement of a privileged section of society. This system of land monopoly having failed completely as a land code, as was evidenced in the social discontent, the prevalence of poverty, and the non-fulfilment of the obligations upon the performance of which it could alone rest a claim for existence, it became both the duty and the right of the State to call upon the unjust steward to give an account of his stewardship, for he could now be steward no longer. Land is a national agent, and the value of land arises from the aggregation of population and the exercise of industry by a people. To permit a class to hold the land of a country as its absolute property involved the giving of an influence over the lives, happiness, and industry of the people of that country inconsistent with the freedom and welfare of mankind, the maintenance of which should be the primary object of every people. Thus airily did the young reformer dispose of one of the most complex of social, political, legal and economic problems.

Having fired this formidable-looking, but harmless, bomb at Parnell, he started for Cork to embark for America. At Cork he was surrounded by admirers, and although he had not intended to make a speech, he was prevailed upon to say that he was sorry he could not speak upon topics that he wished to discuss because, in deference to the express wish of his friend and their representative, "Ireland's Champion," he had endeavoured to travel through Ireland without making any speech whatever, and he would be the last man in the movement to do or say anything to embarrass Mr. Parnell's work or actions in the House of Commons. Parnell had all the responsibilities in the great movement upon his shoulders and he was only a free lance by his side. The day had, however, come, though Davitt may not have realised it then.

when Parnell looked upon free lances, especially of the calibre of Davitt himself, as extremely inconvenient customers. He was going to America, he explained, to appeal for support for Parnell and the Ladies' Land League, at the moment an object of far different kind of pre-occupation with Parnell himself, and to deal with rumours spread industriously "by the lying landlord organs in Ireland and England" that there was a split in the movement, and that Parnell's followers were breaking away from his leadership. "I shall tell the people of America," he went on to say, "that this is a foul calumny and a lie. When the landlords get a split between Mr. Parnell and me they will be well on towards the twentieth century. Dissension and disunion had been the cause of failure in the past, and they had profited from experience." But he added as his parting shot: "I will tell them what I told the English people in Liverpool—that what Ireland wants is the nationalisation of the land administered in Dublin by an Irish Parliament."

Parnell timed his reply to a nicety. Availing of an interviewer attached to the *New York Herald*, he had his views on Davitt's new departure published in that great journal the very morning Davitt landed on American soil. It is just possible that neither Davitt nor Parnell knew much about or had ever had the opportunity of studying very closely the question of land nationalisation at all. Both of them flung a batch of figures, almost haphazard, into the face of the public, and Davitt embellished his statistics with a good deal of attractive eloquence, but in reality it was the idea alone that Davitt was enamoured of, and it was the idea that Parnell now proceeded to squelch. The pros and cons of a profound question have seldom been more summarily dismissed. "In my judgment," said Parnell, using one of his favourite modes of expression, "however theoretically sound the plan for the nationalisation of land may be considered in the opinion of its supporters, I cannot see how it could ever come in Ireland within the region of practical politics." As to the phrase "the land for the people," he never intended to convey by it land nationalisation; he meant occupying ownership; "because experience had shown that under this system it can and could be cultivated to the highest pitch, and made to produce the most food of which it is capable, and the taxing power which, for purposes of freeing any other classes in the community from the burden of taxation and throwing it upon the land, an Irish National Government might hereafter have under the plan of nationalisation, it would equally have under the plan of occupying ownership, which was originally

constituted, and has always been up to the present the programme of the Land League." He also pointed out that the tenant-farmer would have a smaller annual payment to make "under our system than under nationalisation," and that "under our system the payments would terminate at the end of fifty-two years," while "under the other system they would continue for ever."

Parnell proceeded to say that he recognised the right of any person to formulate his own opinions, and influence the people to follow him in the direction of these opinions, but, and this was the real point of the interview, in view of the great risk of division, and the serious evils which had always attended division in the ranks of the Irish people, he could not view the step lately taken in formulating this new plan as one likely to be justified by successful results. If they were now to take up a new scheme, it would go to show that they did not know their own minds. Therefore, he returned to the gist of the matter, that which he was really concerned and anxious about, the serious danger of division in Ireland in consequence of starting "this new theory."

Yet Parnell wished to appear entirely fair to Davitt, and he did give him a first-rate chance of retreat. He believed, he concluded, that Mr. Davitt was simply desirous to test public opinion in Ireland, and when he found, "as I believe he will," that the large majority of the Irish people were not inclined to depart from the old lines, with that public spirit and integrity, and desire for unity that distinguished his career, he would see that the interest of Ireland could be served best by working out the results to which they had been devoting their energies since the beginning of the movement.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the astuteness of this pronouncement. That it begged the whole question, from Davitt's point of view, is obvious enough; but as Parnell knew, instinctively and otherwise, that the facts were on his side, evasion was neither here nor there. The really interesting thing about it is that it was a most adroit method of killing two birds with the one stone. The idea had been mooted that Parnell was getting away from the agitation, that Davitt was the sheet-anchor of the Land League movement, and now here was Parnell harking Davitt back to "the old lines," and beseeching him to resume his work in the old cause. There were few occasions which Parnell did not turn to more than one account. No mere renewal of vows could have carried as much conviction as this message of recall to an erring disciple.

When Davitt arrived at New York, June 18, he found that he had stirred a hornet's nest, and the first news that reached Ireland from the other side of the Atlantic was that the feeling of the Irish was hostile to the nationalisation scheme, which seemed to find support nowhere except in the columns of the *Irish World*. Meanwhile, it had been vigorously attacked at this side by the redoubtable Land Leaguer, Mr. Matt Harris, of Ballinasloe. Davitt attended a reception in New York the day after his arrival. It was evident at the start that he was face to face with a substantial body of antagonists, but he was completely successful in dispelling their hostility, and before the end of his speech—a very able performance—he had soothed those who had evidently come to pluck a crow with him. He boldly faced the music, declared that he knew he was the subject of a number of charges, went through them one by one, and settled all differences apparently to everybody's satisfaction. The charges against him he set out under a dozen heads—that he was splitting up the Land League movement; that he was setting himself up as a rival of Parnell; that he was promulgating a new departure; that he was abandoning the Land League programme; that he was going in for communism; falling into the hands of Henry George; being run by the *Irish World*; that he intended to start a new fund; that he was for handing over the land of Ireland to the English Government; abandoning Irish Nationalists, repudiating the Irish Nationalists, and going in for an alliance with the English people. The indictment was not by any means as farcical an affair as it looks to-day. These things were laid definitely at his door, and feeling was in a state that demanded an answer. It is not necessary to go through the brilliant speech he delivered in defence. It is interesting however to note that he preceded the German Kaiser in the threat of "the mailed hand," but of course Irish landlordism was the enemy against which he shook it. It is curious to see how he handled the allegation that he was a rival of Parnell. "The Irish people," he said, "would never accept me as a leader because I belong to the ranks of the people." I know of no more remarkable and instructive admission of the inherent conservatism of the Irish character. As to the nationalisation idea, he urged that his speech at Liverpool had been misunderstood. He maintained that he had not changed his opinions, and that he had said at Westport, in Parnell's hearing, that no settlement of the Irish land question could be satisfactory which did not give the people the land as national property. For the rest, he simply put his plan next Parnell's, not in the way of

opposition, but to test public opinion on the solutions of the question advocated by two schools of economic thought. "My views can wait," he said, amid approving cheers; "but the work of the Land League must brook no delay."

Of communism he confessed himself ignorant; he differed from Mr. Henry George on essential points; and as to the *Irish World*, expressions had been used that might be construed into placing him in rivalry with Parnell, but Mr. Patrick Ford had promised him that they would not be used again. As to the allegations that he was whittling down his nationalism and favoured the ownership of the land of Ireland by the English Government, he had to be even more explicit and categorical. But he did not mince matters. He stood manfully by his Liverpool speech. He would sooner see the land of Ireland administered by English Government than by the merciless and polluted hands of its exacting and unscrupulous mercenaries, the Irish landlords—a preference in which, it is perfectly safe to say, he would not have been joined by Parnell.

The change in his own political opinions he frankly avowed. He had, or at least Mr. Henry George had for him, written a letter to the *Standard*, of London, immediately after the Phoenix Park murders. He adopted the letter, and indeed did not for many years disclose the secret of its authorship. In that letter it was stated that while in Portland Prison he had changed his opinions as to the best way of serving Ireland. In saying this he neither repudiated nor condemned those who relied on force. He had severed his connection with that party, knowing that its leaders wished him to do so on account of his having joined in a legal movement; and he found, he declared, that he could serve the cause better by joining in the nationalistic movement unhampered by the ties of party associates. He came to even closer quarters with his critics, the extremists. He gravely questioned whether the English workingmen were to blame for the past misgovernment of Ireland. He claimed the right to aid his people and to aid the working people of England if he wished; and in a passage of great power and feeling, full of manly eloquence and fire, he exclaimed: "I owe nothing to the Irish people, but I think there is a balance to my credit, and as I wish to increase that balance, I shall discard all hate for England while striving for the prosperity of Ireland." As to Parnell's criticism of his Liverpool speech, he did not believe it was a fair criticism. "With the full text of my speech before him," said Davitt, with evident bitterness, "and knowing my motives and opinions as he did, I am sorry that

he encouraged the belief that my Liverpool speech was prompted by motives which my whole career disproves." But for all that he gave them two watch-words—fidelity to Parnell's leadership and loyalty to the League. Parnell had all the qualities of a leader, and they should be faithful to him as long as he was true to the League and to Ireland, and no longer. It is evident that this was not the speech of a politician. It was the speech of a highly courageous idealist, who had little or no time for tact. With all its fine qualities and stimulating passages, it was by no means calculated to make the wary chief take his watchful eye off the impetuous tribune.

At Boston he again rather needlessly gave a pin-prick to the Irish leader. "I don't deal as generously with the landlords as Mr. Parnell," he observed, "because I cannot afford to be generous to those who have never been just to others." He had already pleaded for a "just and moderate tolerance of opinion within proper latitude in the efforts for social regeneration," but the kernel of the matter was the amount of latitude which Davitt deemed proper. It is not hard to see that these American speeches were little calculated to allay the distrust which had arisen between the two great men.

Of course, Davitt set himself right with Irish-Americans as to the chief national question. He painted Dublin Castle with the requisite vividness, but insisted that that dingy and dishonest institution was as little understood by the English people and as unrepresentative of constitutional government as if "the ill-omened edifice that stands upon Cork Hill were situated on the banks of the Yang-tse-Kiang."

A touch of humour, which was indeed not meant to be funny, was imparted to the American visit by a method of raising cash which Davitt inaugurated at the instigation of Miss Anna Parnell. He carried with him across the Atlantic five thousand cancelled cheques which were to be sold as mementoes for the benefit of the evicted tenants, and a substantial sum of money was raised in that novel fashion. He addressed fourteen meetings in the course of fifteen days, and before leaving for home made a proposal, which, however, came to nothing—that the Irish in America should form a Celtic Confederation of their political, philanthropic, and temperance societies, co-operate together, hold conferences every year in the interest of the Irish cause, and correspond with the Executive of the Irish Land League. Even in this proposal Davitt was a pioneer, though the Pan-Celtic movement which was instituted in later years did not move precisely along the lines of his original idea.

He landed at Antwerp on July 27, and was shocked to learn of the sudden death of Miss Fanny Parnell. With Mr. William Redmond, he visited her at her home, Ironsides, Bordenstown, two days before he sailed from America. A very pleasing evening was spent. "Her whole talk," said Davitt, "was of an approaching visit to Ireland." The last story of her is in perfect consonance with her life-long hate of England. She returned home with a copy of the *New York Herald*. It contained the rumour of a British defeat in Egypt. She burst into the drawingroom, waving the newspaper over her head, and with the excited announcement: "Oh, mother, there is an Egyptian victory; Arabi has whipped the Britishers. It is grand." She died next day. Her last poem was written on Michael Davitt, and was read by her mother at his reception in New York on June 19.

Interviewed when he stepped ashore, Davitt gave a brief summary of his tour. Mr. John Devoy's paper alone excepted, his explanation of the much-explained Liverpool speech had been, he said, accepted. He would continue to advocate land nationalisation; he would continue to support it in controversy and meetings against the rival scheme, and he was glad, he added, that the labourers were going forward agitating their grievances and demanding their rights. Before starting he had given one cause of offence to the Irish leader. The moment he landed he uttered what was to Parnell uncommonly like another. For Parnell did not like these issues to be multiplied about his ears—except with his consent and after his own fashion.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A BENEVOLENT DICTATORSHIP.

THE Coercion Bill was given precedence of the Arrears Bill, but, preliminary to both, the Government had to run the gauntlet of some discussions in the Commons as to the negotiations which led up to the Kilmainham Treaty. A curious incident occurred. Parnell, on May 15, read to the House his letter to O'Shea. Forster rose when he had finished to ask if he had read the entire letter. Parnell replied that he had kept no copy, but had been supplied with one by O'Shea, and that it was possible one paragraph had been omitted. The Tories laughed, cheered, and cocked their ears. Forster produced the letter, handed it over to

O'Shea, and O'Shea read it. The missing paragraph was that which adumbrated the co-operation of the Irish members with the Liberals—a union with the Liberals, in fact. There were more Tory laughter and cheers, and, of course, the matter could not end there. It was indeed a strange omission. Later on it was cleared up, as far as it could be, but whether the explanation carried much conviction with it is open to question. O'Shea said that after he had delivered the letter he reflected that there was one sentence in it which might give rise to misconstruction, and that he had withdrawn that portion of it, as he considered he had authority to use his own judgment in such matters to prevent misunderstanding. Chamberlain corroborated his emissary. He confessed he did not pay much attention to it, but he thought it strange that he should wish to withdraw any part of the letter, but "being on terms of intimate relationship with the hon. member for Cork" he did not think the matter of sufficient importance, and, therefore, did not mention it. Parnell avowed that he had not intended that the letter should fall into the hands of Forster, but that it should be shown "to one other person." Still, handsomely enough, he did not find fault with O'Shea for the responsibility he took upon himself. Forster was twitted with revealing Cabinet secrets, and there ended one of the most awkward little incidents in Parnell's Parliamentary career.

He fought but half heartedly against the Coercion Bill. He really seems to have felt that the Government had no option. Yet there was only one sound reason for the Bill at all. It was indubitable that a formidable secret society was in full working order in Ireland. It had accomplished an audacious crime. It might be urged that drastic powers were necessary to cope with the new danger. In point of fact, the 16th section did play a great part in enabling the authorities to bring the assassins to justice, but, strangely enough, it was not put into operation until the Act was many months old. That section empowered a magistrate to conduct a secret inquiry on oath into any crime, although no person was as yet charged in connection with its commission. Mr. John Adye Curran, Q.C., conducted what came to be known as the Star Chamber in Dublin Castle, and succeeded in annihilating the Invincible Conspiracy under that elastic and, as it turned out, most useful provision.

But even without this power the authorities ought to have been, and would probably have been, able to trace and convict the criminals. Yet, if the Government had asked for this special power to deal with a secret society it would have

been almost impossible to question its expediency. What is harder to understand is that, after virtually avowing the inutility of coercion, and having released the national leaders in the expectation that they, without coercive laws, would be able to check outrage, they cast patience to the winds, and plunged headlong through the old ruts. The Act, which passed after the customary wholesale suspension of Irish members, abolished trial by jury for certain crimes, gave the Executive omnipotent powers of search and of suppression, made it an offence to be out after dark without being able to give a good account of one's self, and gave power to arrest strangers. Bright, who had torn his Radicalism to tatters, found himself reminded by Mr. Thomas Sexton that he who had resisted the Aliens' Bill in the upheaval of 'Forty-eight was now supporting it, though there were no such doings to be feared as those through which he managed to keep his convictions intact thirty-four years previously. But Bright could always find reasons to soothe his conscience while he slaughtered his principles, where Ireland was concerned. This very year he cut himself adrift from Gladstone and the Ministry because of their aggression in Egypt: he could have tolerated aggression in Ireland till doomsday. The best comment on this ferocious measure was supplied by the Irish judges, who passed a resolution declaring "that the Prevention of Crimes (Ireland) Bill would seriously impair public confidence in the judicial office, and thereby permanently injure the administration of justice in Ireland," and Baron Fitzgerald resigned because he considered that the new duties cast upon his brethren and himself were unconstitutional. We leave it for the moment with the remark that, like its predecessors, it failed. Outrage continued and increased, and became more horrible than ever. All Morley could find to say in its favour was that it was at least law.

It has been charged against Parnell that from May, 1882, he began to be remiss in his attention to the cause of which he was now the chief if not practically the sole custodian. The blame has been put upon the *liaison* which corrupted his life. One of his colleagues has committed himself to the statement that the Coercion Bill had to be resisted by the Irish members "with little or no assistance from their once ever-present and ever-vigilant chief." "This was the period," he goes on to say, "when there first came those periodical and mysterious absences, which were destined in time to be so habitual as to be accepted as part of the price that had to be paid for Parnell's matchless leadership." I have tried to test the matter in as far as it is concerned with

the passage of the Coercion Bill. The Bill was introduced on May 11. In the course of the Committee stage there was an all-night sitting, when eighteen Irish members were suspended, after which the Irish Party, by resolution, which Mr. Justin McCarthy succeeded in reading to the House, decided by way of protest to take no further part in the proceedings on the measure. This happened on July 2. In that period the newspaper reports prove the presence of Parnell at twenty-five, and do not notice him at six sittings of the House. It may be that at such a crisis a great Parliamentary chief should not be out of the arena for a single day, but there is here no evidence of that indifference and neglect implied in the statement I have quoted.

The Arrears Bill was founded upon a Bill which Parnell and Mr. Maurice Healy, a first-rate authority on agrarian law, had drafted in Kilmainham Prison. It applied to tenancies under £30, and provided that arrears should be cancelled if the tenant paid the rent due in 1881, and of the antecedent arrears paid one year's rent, the State paying another, and satisfied a legal tribunal of his inability to pay the whole burden. Gladstone's final settlement of the Irish land question had lasted just one year.

In May Mrs. O'Shea made herself known to Gladstone. Both of them have given accounts of the beginning of an acquaintanceship as curious as it was important. She wrote to the Premier expressing a wish that he should see Parnell. It can scarcely have been that she took this action on her own initiative. Gladstone, however, declined to meet the Irish leader in private. She wrote again, stated that she was a niece of Lord Hatherley, and asked him to meet her, and talk the matter over in Thomas's Hotel. They met there on June 2. Gladstone states: "She said that a great change had come over Parnell with reference to myself personally and with reference to the Liberal Party, and that he desired friendly relations with us. I said that I had no objection to friendly relations with him, and wished to meet him in a fair spirit." She states that they had a long chat about Parnell and politics, and that Gladstone "knew before the conclusion of the interview, and allowed me to know that he knew, what I desired that he should know—that my personal interest in Parnell was my only interest in Irish politics." She adds: "Mr. Gladstone having agreed that it would be of considerable convenience to the Government to be in private and amicable communication with Mr. Parnell, and that I, whose interests were inseparable from those of the Irish leader, would be confidently

accepted as such intermediary by him, we parted, satisfied I think on both sides with the afternoon's compact." No letters of any importance passed between them. "All my communications with her were oral," says Gladstone, "and all my communications with Parnell were oral," with the exception, of course, of the letter after the Phoenix Park tragedy. We may take it that her account of this transaction is correct. Mr. Barry O'Brien asked Chamberlain: "May I take it that the Cabinet was practically in relations with Parnell through Mrs. O'Shea from 1882?" "Yes," was the reply.

An event of unique interest brought Parnell to Dublin in August. The unveiling of the great monument and statue of O'Connell, the opening of a National Industrial Exhibition, and the presentation to him of the freedom of the city were all arranged for the middle of the month. He was present when the ceremony of unveiling was performed, but the insistent and tumultuous demands of the vast crowd alone extracted from him a speech of extreme brevity. Turning to Foley's superb and massive figure of the Liberator, and raising his finger in dramatic fashion, he concluded his few remarks with the words: "That our nation may live, and last as long as the bronze figure which looks down upon you is my wish, and I believe the wish of the vast multitudes thronging our city to-day." At the City Hall, when he was made a freeman, he referred to the coercive measures of the day. "I cannot touch on any political question," he complained, and the excuse served well enough, as he proceeded to deplore that it was only in the House of Commons apparently that the Government would permit their actions to be criticised. He returned to a subject which seemed like an obsession with him: "I have never believed in the possibility of maintaining an independent Irish Party in the House of Commons for any length of time." He had still, however, the old consolation: "But," he went on to say, "I believe it is possible to increase its numbers and to maintain it for such a time as will enable us to gain the great object of reform which has always possessed the hearts of the Irish people at home and abroad—I mean the restoration of the legislative independence of Ireland." He then passed on to municipal themes—the poverty of the working classes and the like—and dealt with them in a suggestive and interesting style. It would be better for the governing classes, he said in passing, to throw in their lot with the people, even at the eleventh hour, and set to work for the common good: but if they would not do so, they would go on without them,

and these classes would live to regret the chance they had thrown away.

He now strangled the Ladies' Land League. A golden opportunity placed it at his mercy. The ladies wanted £500. "Not a shilling," was his answer to Davitt, who came to him for the money. "They have squandered the money given them, and I shall take care that they get no more." He was obdurate. The debts incurred by the ladies were mentioned, but all to no use. Davitt left in a temper. Parnell relaxed, and sent Dillon to bring him back. At length Davitt returned, and Parnell handed him the cheque, with this ultimatum: "There, let those ladies make the most of it. They will get no more money from us, and let the League be dissolved at once." So died a unique, memorable, and victorious organisation, of financial paralysis induced by the Irish leader. His sister Anna was desperately angry. She was a woman of adamant character and resolve. Fear seems to have been utterly alien to her temperament and disposition. A few months before this time, on June 14, she had held up Lord Spencer, the Viceroy, in the middle of his cavalry escort as he passed through Westmoreland Street, in Dublin, and demanded if it was true that he had stopped the building of houses for evicted tenants in Limerick. She now found the organisation of which she was the heart and soul killed by her masterly brother. It is said that she never forgave him.

In connection with the same episode we have the first definite evidence of a phase of feeling which developed in the great leader. Writing from Dublin to Mrs. O'Shea, he said: "The two D's (Dillon and Davitt) have quarrelled with me because I won't allow any further expenditure by the ladies, and because I have made arrangements to make the payments myself for the future. They are in hopes of creating a party against me in the country by distributing the funds amongst their own creatures, and are proportionately disappointed." It has been said, and it is nearly impossible to resist the conclusion, that as he advanced in a double life he grew suspicious of his lieutenants. It is one of the most common penalties for deception. Mr. Dillon's long life in the front rank of the politicians of Ireland is a sufficient refutation of this extraordinary allegation by Parnell. It was quite as absurd in the case of Davitt. He had just told the praises of Parnell's leadership through the New England States. No single man, except Parnell himself, had done more to consolidate his position, and to hold to him the allegiance of the Irish race. "By right of election," said

Davitt at Philadelphia, "as well as by virtue of ability, earnestness, and statesmanship capacity in his short political career, Mr. Parnell has won a pre-eminent right to the position he now holds both inside and outside of Parliament. So long as he holds this position, so long will he have my humble support. But I am compelled to state right out that I am no blind partisan of any man, or a slavish follower of any party or section of party within the Land League movement. I am not aware of any Irish leader of modern times who has been so tolerant of individual opinions and so unwilling to exact what others have demanded from their followers as the present head of the movement." He went on to perpetrate one of those things that had better have been left unsaid, but obviously without *arrière pensée*: "Mr. Parnell is broad-minded and sagacious enough to know that leaders, as a rule, are accidents to the cause with which they are identified, and that no movement dependent entirely upon personal capacity or individual direction can be a strong or aggressive political weapon." It is to be feared that Parnell was growing to a frame of mind not altogether in harmony with such independent sentiments.

Parnell addressed two more meetings before re-crossing to England, on September 3. The first was a meeting to take steps for the protection of the evicted tenants menaced by a scheme which had been formulated by Mr. Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh and a group of landlords. These agrarian magnates proposed to form a company with a capital of three-quarters of a million pounds sterling for the purpose of getting possession of large tracts of lands, sweeping away Land Leaguers, and planting in their stead occupiers amenable to landlordism. Parnell vigorously attacked this new plantation crusade—Kavanagh's Eviction Company, as he called it. He pointed out that many evicted tenants were deprived of the benefit of the Arrears Act owing to the period of redemption having lapsed, and owing also to the fact that the interest in their farms had been sold by their landlords. He invited the other farmers of the country to be loyal to the wounded soldiers of the fight, and sprang upon the meeting one of those startlingly dramatic passages which seemed to come to him like an inspiration, and always created an intense intimacy and personal sympathy between him and his audience. No orator of his time was more prolific in such captivating messages to the hearts of the common people. "The prisoners have been provided for," he exclaimed; "we have been generously fed while in captivity by the contributions of our fellow-countrymen, and as one of those

who lived for six months upon the contributions while I was in prison, I may say that no bread which I have ever eaten tasted sweeter than the bread which was supplied to me in Kilmainham by the generous and spontaneous gift of my countrymen." Who could resist such a leader!

The second meeting was held to bring into existence an Irish Labourers' League, and is worth noticing only because it enabled Parnell to enunciate once more his views upon the condition, the grievances, and the rights of the agricultural labourers and the workers of the towns. It is also noteworthy because of the studied and even emphatic moderation of the advice which he gave to the classes he was specially addressing. The power of organisation, he was careful to say, had been taken away from the farmers. It was still open to the labourers. He invited them to use it so that it would be impossible for the authorities to interfere with them. To the farmers he said: "Give the labourers the half-acre they are looking for; and to the labourers, do not push your claims beyond the bounds of prudence and moderation; and do not advocate those claims in any way which would be considered contrary to the law of the land, or in any way which would be objectionable in its spirit and in its manner to the farmers from whom you are asking these concessions. I certainly could not be a party to, or tolerate for an instant any unfair aggression by the labourers upon the farmers any more than I could tolerate or sanction any refusal on the part of the farmers to give in properly and in a suitable spirit to the claims of the labourers." He was certainly keeping the Kilmainham Treaty with meticulous punctiliousness.

There were others, however, who did not see why agitation should be slowed into somnolency, especially as the Coercion Act and the jury-packing, which became rampant in the criminal courts, constituted a grave violation of the Treaty on the part of the Government. The National cause was in a perilous condition at the moment. There was no national organisation; Parnell had been led to do what he himself protested against a year before—to found a separate association for the labourers. Davitt, who had imposed quietude upon Ford while he was in America, and had found Egan, in Paris, favourable to a revival of the active policy, began to force upon Parnell's attention the urgent need of a national organisation. The Irish National League, established on October 17, was the outcome of what Parnell himself jestingly called "The Avondale Treaty." The agreement was that

Davitt should allow his nationalisation scheme to enjoy a good, sound sleep, and that the new League should fly the colours of peasant proprietary. Home Rule, however, was the chief plank of the platform, and in that respect the National League was more to the heart of the leader than The Land League has ever been. There was much discussion about the constitution of the new organisation, but Davitt, who wished for a large measure of democratic control, yielded on important points to the conservatism of Parnell, and it is literally true that the National League was founded upon and was wholly inspired by confidence in his leadership. It placed the national destiny more absolutely in the hands of one man than had ever been the case before, and this unique concentration of responsibility, initiative, and power was, in fact, accountable for both the triumphs and the troubles that ensued. A unity was imposed upon the nationalist masses such as Ireland had never before known in her politics. That unity proved irresistible for eight memorable years. But it was a unity based upon absolute confidence in a single man. There was established, to put it plainly, a benevolent and acceptable dictatorship. A fatal accident to the beloved dictator was certain to shatter the whole structure; and that, of course, is what actually happened.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A MASTERPIECE OF DEFIANCE.

It may well have appeared to Parnell that it was time to establish such a dictatorship in a formal manner. The policy of inactivity was proving irksome to some of the leading spirits as well as Davitt. He was positively restive under it. He had already taken to the platform at Wexford, on October 8, and with Mr. Tim Healy had roused the people to a great pitch of enthusiasm. He did not conceal his dissatisfaction at the position of the movement. "I confess," he said, "that the ugliest feeling I experience in Ireland to-day is that which must arise from contemplating how little has resulted from the great agitation which has been carried on for three or four years." The Land League was not started to make any compromise to this miserable result with landlordism. Amongst the causes of failure he placed almost first the senseless acts of vengeance which had occurred: "I contend that every shot fired, previous to the suppression of the Land League, passed clean through the body of the

organisation ere reaching either a landlord or agent or land-grabber; and every murder that has taken place since that event has put an additional nail in the coffin of the League." Davitt was positively truculent in his condemnation of crime, and his denunciations of outrages against dumb animals were terrible in their wrathful indignation. Mr. Healy was more patient in his counselling. He did not take the view of Davitt as to what had been gained, and he was right. It was a great deal to have stayed rent-raising after but two years of the movement, and there were other improvements as well. But Healy was itching for activity. He said, with characteristic humour, that they were greenhorns when they tackled the problem first, but when they went forward again the landlords would have a much tougher and uglier fight to face; and, as his contribution to the new activity, he suggested that there was no reason why landlords should be permitted to ride or hunt over the farmers' lands.

Even at the Convention, when the National League was founded, Davitt claimed the right to state his special agrarian policy before the assemblage. No doubt he merely re-announced his belief that, until the land was restored to the whole people to be the national property, there could be no final settlement of the Irish question; but the making of the claim of privilege and the re-assertion of the principle against which Parnell chafed, and that in the very presence of the chief, showed what an imperious and watchful follower Davitt was likely to be. He now proceeded to get himself into trouble with the Government again. After a tour in Scotland, during which he addressed several meetings, and a lecture in London, he delivered a speech at Navan on November 26, for which he was forthwith prosecuted. It was a deliverance strongly reminiscent of '79 and '80—strong, outspoken, courageous, eloquent. A recurrence of famine was feared, and the orator drew pregnant lessons from the apprehension. Two years had not elapsed since the hat went round America for the starving Irish. A Land Act and an Arrears Act had been passed, and yet a few wet weeks during the summer months were sufficient to reduce thousands of families to the level of pauperism. "Mr. Parnell and I have told our kindred in America that we would beg no more for Ireland. For my part," he declared, "I shall never beg a single penny for an Irish famine." If the people would pay rent that should go to feed their children, then let them die, and Ireland and humanity were well rid of such a coward race; but the tenant-farmers were not going to die, and they would not starve. They would compel the Government, which pre-

vented them living on the soil of Ireland, to support them during the winter; and in case they did not succeed in getting the Government to do this necessary duty, he proposed that they should make Irish landlordism support the people who were starving. "The suggestion I make here to-day, in view of this contingency, will be very unpopular amongst the landed ranks in Ireland." He went on: "I propose, in case Mr. Gladstone does not apply the surplus of the arrears estimate to save the people, that no rent shall be paid from this November till next May; and that out of this sum, portion should be placed in a National Relief Fund for the succour of those whom Irish landlordism will not permit to earn their sustenance from the soil of Ireland." The time would shortly come, unless wise and just legislation should ere long prevent this necessity, when the people on the mountain slopes of Donegal, the bleak, stony hillsides of Connemara, and the marshy sloblands of the western and south-western coast would have to be told in self-preservation to march down and take possession of the rich soil of the wide, depopulated plains, whereon to make existence possible, in accordance with Divine intention and the requirements of Christian civilisation. "I ask nothing better to meet the coming crisis just now," he observed slyly, "than that Mr. Parnell should be driven by the action of the Government to take counsel with the Irish people on Irish soil how best to do what English statesmen refuse to grant to his temperate demands." He finished with an impassioned peroration, which stirs the blood even in the reading.

Parnell must have read the speech with anything but pleasure. "Do you mean to carry on the war or to slow down the agitation?" Dillon had asked him. "To slow down the agitation," he replied. "He was opposed to a fresh land agitation," says Davitt, "and wished to keep solely on the Home Rule tack." The Government, on December 2, began proceedings against him for this vigorous pronouncement, and he resigned instantly his membership of the Executive of the National League. "It is evident," he wrote in his letter of resignation, "that the Government has endeavoured to hold the National League responsible for words of mine which are not representative of the programme or principle of that body." But the case hung fire for a month, and Davitt filled the interval with another lecturing tour in England. At Oldham, some extremists tried to break up his meeting, and a day later, when speaking at Manchester, he paid these disturbers off with the defiance that he would not flatter his countrymen and minister to Irish

national vanity for the sake of basking in the sunshine of popularity—a rule of conduct to which he adhered consistently to the end of his life.

He visited Haslingden, the home of his youth, and experienced one of the pleasantest greetings he was ever to enjoy. Old friends gathered round him, his schoolmaster amongst them, and their honest and kindly welcome drew from the great agitator a speech glowing with genuine warmth, and full of the spirit of friendship. He disclaimed the idea of a war against England. While he was the sworn enemy of her misrule in his native land, he had not preached a war of revenge, for, amongst other things, he recalled how he had been treated in his boyhood days by the good folk of Haslingden.

The trial was sprung upon him while he was travelling through England. He hastened across, and was quickly disposed of by the Coercion Court. A statute of Edward III. was invoked, and he was ordered to give bail for his future good behaviour. He refused, and was sent to Richmond Bridewell, in Dublin, for six months, four of which he actually endured. While here he was visited by the notorious Government spy and *agent provocateur*, known as "Red Jim" McDermott. Mr. Tim Healy was in the prison at the same time for a similar indiscretion, and to Davitt and him the scoundrel directed some sinister conversation about the Phoenix Park murders. Davitt closed the chat peremptorily, and later on was able to arrest the ruffian's activities in Canada, where he was engaged "endeavouring to incite to dynamite outrages, and had actually procured the commission of one."

The last months of 1882 and the opening months of 1883 were filled with tragic happenings. The press was full of ridiculous scares—rumours of "risings" and dynamite plots. The military authorities thought it right to draw up a minute on the defences of Dublin, as if an invasion or an insurrection were imminent. But the reality was, indeed, far more thrilling than the fiction. The tremendous Coercion Act did not exercise the slightest deterrent effect. Fearful murders were committed in the provinces and in the metropolis. The leading spirits of the Invincible gang had been in prison as suspects for several months. A supposed informer named Kenny was assassinated under a railway arch in the city, and immediately afterwards Daniel Curley, subsequently proved to be the chairman of the assassination committee, Edward McCaffrey and James Carey were imprisoned under the powers of the Coercion Act. Carey was taken into custody at St. Stephen's Green, and made a desperate resist-

ance. For some months Dublin was free from outrages, but in November there was an outbreak of crime which indicated only too plainly that some of the ruffians accountable for the assassination in the Phoenix Park were still roaming the streets of the city. An attempt, a bogus one it was surmised, was made upon the life of one of the judges. A bloody affray amongst rival groups of extremists, in which a policeman lost his life, next startled the citizens. Then a man who had recently served upon a jury in an agrarian murder trial was pounced upon, and almost done to death in a manner similar to that in which the Under-Secretary had been killed. He was brutally stabbed at his own door, and the exclamation of the assassin, "Ah, you villain," proved a valuable clue to the perpetrators of the crime in the Phoenix Park as well as of this. Such are the thin and flimsy threads by which great criminals are enmeshed.

While Davitt was in Richmond Bridewell his friends desired him to give the necessary bail, so that he might proceed to the United States, where a Convention was to be held, at which it was feared the extreme party might gain the upper hand. He could not see his way to take this course, but he issued a letter of great value in which he assailed and denounced the policy of dynamite as vigorously, as mercilessly, and as unanswerably as he had attacked outrages of a different description in Ireland. It is interesting and permissible to compare Davitt's attitude upon these matters with that of Parnell. The leader was once asked to propose a resolution condemning outrages. "No," was the uncompromising reply. "I dislike outrages as much as any man, but I am not going to act police for the English Government." But it was this unlimited indifference to the opinion of England that betrayed him into the fatal error which wrecked his leadership and cost him his life.

A few speeches in a moderate tone were delivered by the chief in Munster before the new year. His reception in Cork lacked nothing of enthusiasm. He was firmly entrenched in the leadership of the nation, and the people were quite ready to take their politics from him, weak or strong, according as he himself desired to make them. He was entertained at a banquet, and in the course of his speech, one of the longest and most closely reasoned he ever delivered, an interrupter, who was ejected, was found to be an Englishman from Birkenhead, and armed with a revolver. There was, however, no cause for alarm, and when brought before the magistrates the offender pleaded successfully "the strength of Irish whiskey." It is curious to note the refer-

ences in this speech to what in later times has become known as the *Sinn Féin* policy—the withdrawal of Irish members from the House of Commons, as advocated by John Mitchel. He waived it aside as impracticable, but continued : “ I shall welcome the time, if it ever comes, when it would be possible for us to withdraw from the House of Commons.” He spoke with a correct preception of the future, when he almost distinctively prophesied that the next General Election in England would be turned by the votes of the Irish electors in that country upon the question of Home Rule ; and as for the rest, when some hisses were raised at Forster’s name, he quietly silenced them, and affected to think they were too hard on the poor, old gentleman, and that it might have been better if they had tolerated him for a while longer.

An event now occurred which served to make matters very difficult for him once again in England. The authorities had been incessantly prosecuting inquiries into the crimes committed in the city of Dublin. The secret inquiry conducted by Mr. John Adye Curran was a complete success. A few of the conspirators made a clean breast of the whole horrible affair, and a mass of corroborative testimony was cleverly pieced together. It was astonishing at the end to find that the criminals had left so many traces behind them—so many, indeed, that but for the sake of the complete elucidation of the revolting conspiracy not more than a single informer, if even one at all, would have been necessary to convict the whole fiendish band. One night in the middle of January, 1883, the police swooped down upon the malefactors, and before morning almost every one engaged in the conspiracy was in custody. The magisterial investigation was a series of startling surprises, culminating in the appearance of Carey, beyond a doubt one of the most infamous of men, as a witness for the Crown against the dupes to whom he had pointed out the victim for assassination. The astonishing revelations renewed in the English mind all the passionate feelings which the outrages themselves had aroused. There was an outbreak of hatred against the Irish, and the idea got hold of the public mind that it was probable guilty knowledge of the conspiracy would be brought home to the Irish Party.

Forster saw his chance, came down to the House in February, and delivered a philippic against Parnell which sent the Tory Party into the seventh heaven of delight. Forster was an excellent speaker, and he had now personal affronts to avenge upon an enemy, widely believed to be as guilty as any of the coarse, merciless scoundrels who stood in the dock.

Besides, he was a figure to extort sympathy even from those who were not admirers.

The evidence in the murder trials proved that he had barely escaped from the knives and pistols of the Invincibles on nineteen different occasions. Who had a greater right to search these crimes, their aiders and abettors through and through. He now boldly charged Parnell. "It has been often enough stated and shown by statistics that murder followed the meetings and actions of the Land League. Will the hon. member deny and disprove that statement? I will repeat again what the charge is which I make against him. Probably a more serious charge was never made by any member of this House against another member. It is not that he himself directly planned or perpetrated outrages or murders, but that he either connived at them or, when warned, did not use his influence to prevent them." Parnell listened to the stinging charge. As Forster pronounced the words "when warned," he hissed out "It's a lie."

Forster sat down. In the natural order of things the accused should rise at once and reply. Parnell did not rise. English members shouted his name. He remained immovable. Nothing like it had ever been witnessed within the walls of Parliament. The Irish members were alarmed. The chief was allowing the case to go by default. The excitement was painful to endure; and the suspense. But Parnell would not budge. An English member continued the discussion. It afforded the Irish a last chance. They urged Parnell to reply. No. They urged again. No. This steel-bound man was not to be moved against his will. Had he not said, "It's a lie." That was all Forster was worth. But his colleagues could not afford to leave it so. They craved and prayed and besought him to speak. Very well, to please them he would. "He did not want to answer Forster at all. We had to force him," said one of them. He rose, moved the adjournment of the debate, and in that fashion announced that he would deal with "old Buckshot" on the morrow.

The morrow came, amid high excitement and the most eager expectancy. "Mr. Forster's stern interrogations," said the *Times* that day, "fell on Mr. Parnell like the lash of a whip on a man's face." Friend and foe came to the House with a clear sense of the importance of the occasion. A tremendous indictment had to be answered. Would the stern, icy, inscrutable leader tear it to tatters or would he sink under its weight and odium? It was as if Forster had emptied a flagon of gore over his head. How would it be

to-day? Would he stand before his peers clean, or reeking with the blood of victims? The House was thronged. Members could not get seats. They swarmed in the lobbies and galleries, stood in the passages, endured all inconveniences to gain access to the unique and historic scene. The peers came from their own Chamber to the galleries along the side of the House. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster surveyed the scene. The Heir Apparent watched down from a seat over the clock. Parnell entered quietly; sat in the midst of his party. He was the least agitated man in that wonderful arena, where fiercer and more angry duels than those of the stricken field have been witnessed. His composure was noted; indeed, it was the most remarkable feature of the occasion. He was called upon. He rose. His voice carried a chilling tone. He spoke without even the semblance of heat. There was a touch of scorn in his accent, a suggestion of defiance in his eye. The House hung upon his words, and well it might, for it was listening to one of the most remarkable utterances ever heard in the assembly. "I wish to intervene for a very short while, and to a very limited extent, in this debate. In doing so I can assure this House, and I may venture to make the assurance, although some people may think it not a very respectful assurance to make, but still I make it with the greatest possible respect," so ran the masterpiece of contempt, "I can assure this House that it is not from any belief that anything I can say at this time will have the slightest effect on the public opinion of the House or upon the public opinion of the country. I have been accustomed during my political life to rely upon the public opinion of those whom I have desired to help, and with whose aid I have worked for the cause of prosperity and freedom in Ireland, and the utmost I desire to do in the very few words I shall address to this House is to make my position clear to the Irish people at home and abroad. A gentleman has asked me to defend myself. Sir, I have nothing to defend myself from. The right honourable gentleman has confessed that he attempted to obtain a declaration or public promise from me which would have had the effect if given of discrediting me with the Irish people. He has admitted that he failed in that attempt, and, failing in that attempt, he lost his own position. He boasted last night that he had deposed me from some imaginary position which he was pleased to assign to me; but, at least, I have this consolation—that I am in pretty good company, for he has also deposed himself. We both fell into the ditch, and I do not think that in the process of

pulling the right honourable gentleman and myself out of the ditch I have suffered quite as much in the opinion of my countrymen as the right honourable gentleman has suffered in the opinion of his countrymen. If the right honourable gentleman has deposed me from my position as a prominent Irish politician, I admit that he has been very successful in that. I have taken very little part in Irish politics since my release from Kilmainham. I expressed my reasons for that upon the passing of the Crimes Act. I saw that, in my judgment, the Crimes Act would result in such a state of affairs that, between the Government and the secret societies, it would be impossible for constitutional agitation to exist in Ireland. I believe so still. And what is the item of news which was published in the journals of yesterday cabled from America? That Mr. Patrick Ford, of the *Irish World*, who used to collect money for the purpose of sending it to us, is now collecting it for a different purpose. The right honourable gentleman may proudly claim it as part of his work. I regret that it should be so. I look with the utmost apprehension to the future relations between England and Ireland. I see that it is impossible to stem the torrent of prejudice which has arisen during the last few days. I regret that the officials charged with the administration of this Act are unfitted for their post. I am sure the right honourable gentleman, the present Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, must admit that to the fullest extent; and, looking round upon the right honourable member for Bradford, he must say to himself—‘Why am I here while he is there?’ Why was the right honourable gentleman, the member for Bradford, who had acquired experience in the administration of Ireland, who, according to his account, knew everything, although he was invariably wrong—why was he deposed from his position, and the right honourable gentleman—a ‘prentice hand, although a very willing hand—placed in his stead? I think the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant must say to himself in the words of Scripture, ‘I am not worthy to unloose his shoe latchet.’ It would be far better if you were going to pass an Act of this kind, and to administer it as you are going to administer it—up to the hilt—to have had it administered by the seasoned politician who is now in disgrace. Call him back to his post. Send him to help Lord Spencer in the congenial work of the gallows in Ireland. Send him to look after the secret inquisitions of Dublin Castle. Send him to levy the payment of blood-money. Send him to raise the taxes which an unfortunate and starving peasantry have to pay for crimes not committed by them. All that would be congenial work for him. We invite you to fill up your ranks,

and send your ablest and best men to push forward the task of misgoverning and oppressing Ireland. For my part, I am confident as to the future of Ireland. Although her horizon may appear at this moment cloudy, I believe that our people will survive the present oppression, as they have survived many and worse ones. And although our progress may be slow, it will be sure; and the time will come when this House and the people of this country will admit once again that they have been mistaken—that they have been deceived by those who ought to be ashamed of deceiving them; that they have been led astray as to the right method of governing a noble, a generous, a brave and impulsive people; and that they will reject their present leaders, who are conducting them into the terrible course which, I am sorry to say, the Government appears to be determined to enter; that they will reject those friends and leaders with just as much determination as they rejected the services of the right honourable gentleman, the member for Bradford.” The effect of the speech upon the House was profound—it amazed and angered the English and sent the Irish into ecstasies of delight.

An unsuccessful attempt to amend the Land Bill of 1881, and the Explosives Bill, which the Government now thought necessary, and a successful election campaign on behalf of Mr. Tim Healy in Monaghan filled up for Parnell the first half of 1883. The invasion of Ulster excited the wrath of the Orangemen, particularly as the Nationalists, emboldened by their victory in Monaghan, unfurled the flag of the National League in other Ulster counties, and the party of law and order demonstrated in a variety of ways how thin was the partition between them and outrage.

One of the most remarkable incidents in Parnell's career and in the history of modern Ireland falls naturally into its place here. Parnell was financially in low water. He had suffered like other Irish landlords. He had also inherited some pecuniary embarrassments. A mortgage on the estate was foreclosed, and he filed a petition for its sale. The newspapers contained sufficient of the facts to reveal to the people that their leader was in anything but affluent circumstances. Archbishop Croke, of Cashel, proposed in a public letter that the nation should raise the amount involved. The response was at first good, but leisurely. It was possibly felt that there was no need for hurry, but the subscription lists contained the names of bishops, priests, professional men, peasants, and work-a-day people. A strange circumstance gave extraordinary impetus to what had come to be known as the

Tribute. I have already mentioned the diplomatic mission of Mr. George Errington to the Vatican. "England," writes Mr. Barry O'Brien, "had secretly sought the services of the Pope, her ancient enemy, to strike at the Irish leader and the Irish movement." On May 11 the Tribute had reached a sum of £7,688. On that day a letter, signed by Cardinal Simeoni and Monseigneur Jacobini, Prefect and Secretary respectively of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, was despatched to the hierarchy of Ireland condemning the Tribute, and directing them to withhold countenance from it. The result was astonishing, especially to those unacquainted with the Irish people. On June 19 the Tribute amounted to £15,000; in December it reached the great sum of £37,000. "Why," said Gladstone, "it is absurd to suppose that the Pope exercises any influence in Irish politics." The money was presented to Parnell at a banquet in the Rotunda of Dublin. It was a splendid occasion, but it was remarked that the leader never uttered a word of thanks for the princely gift he had received. It would, however, be unfair to say that he did not at all betray his feelings of gratitude. As if to anticipate the comments that might and would be made, he expressly deprecated his inability to convey the emotions he experienced. "I don't know how adequately to express my feelings with regard not only to your lordship's (the Lord Mayor's) address, not only to the address of the Parnell National Tribute, but also with regard to the magnificent demonstration"; these were the words with which he began his speech, "I prefer to leave with the historian the description of to-night and the expression of an opinion as regards the results which to-night must produce." But let it be admitted that it was a curt, cold, and curious way in which to dismiss a nation's offering. Such incidents are judged differently by different minds. So acute an observer as Lord Spencer said it showed the immense power of the man. There are people who imagine that a great man can never do little things; that all their acts are necessarily on the large scale, just as Gilbert's jester had only to say "pass the mustard" to set the table in a roar. But only a blind worshipper could admire the taking of such a superb act of homage almost as a matter of course. The truth is that Parnell was a great egotist, and perhaps he had reason to be.

The dynamite plots, which had now spread from America and were causing consternation throughout England, considerably complicated matters for Parnell. He had decided not to go to the Convention at Philadelphia the previous April, when the National League of America was established.

Instead, he sent a letter of advice, in which he suggested a platform that would "enable us to continue to accept help from America, and at the same time to avoid offering a pretext to the British Government for entirely suppressing the national movement in Ireland." Prudence, moderation, firmness were his watchwords, and it is possible that had he gone to America this year and personally inculcated his cautious policy he might have succeeded in keeping the extremists quiet. As it was, they began making dynamite and blowing up, or attempting to blow up, public buildings in England. Parnell, when asked at the *Times'* Commission about one of the dynamitards, merely observed: "Yes, he was tried and convicted of having bombs in his pocket which it is suggested were going to be thrown on the floor of the House of Commons, which would probably have had an equal effect all round." It was not cynicism that instigated the remark, but the same feeling which prompted him to speak of Ford and Finnerty as "damned fools." He had no sympathy with such methods of political warfare, and in private denounced them freely.

CHAPTER XL.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARNELL AND DAVITT.

THE time was approaching when Davitt would find it impossible to keep step with Parnell, when Parnell would deem it expedient to snuff out the indomitable free lance. The struggle was brief, and when judged from a commonsense point of view, not in any way discreditable to either combatant. There is no good reason to doubt Davitt's honesty towards Parnell. He meant the compliments he paid the chief. Nor is there any ground for supposing that Parnell did not esteem Davitt highly. They were probably never friends in the best sense of the term, but Davitt felt the power of Parnell's personality and valued his stern capacity. Both of them recognised the dire necessity of union in the Irish ranks, but Parnell, a more practical man, with a firmer grip on the concrete, saw more clearly how it was to be attained and maintained. He recognised that the greatest safety lay in the unification of the whole national movement in the person of a single man—and he was the man. He knew that the unification must be absolutely complete if perils were to be avoided from within, and as a consequence of this unification and personification, he perceived that it was

foolish, at the very least, to tolerate alternative plans for dealing with any item, especially such an important item as the land, in the programme of the National League. Davitt's mistake was to suppose that movement along parallel lines meant necessarily unity of effort and effect. He thought as long as Parnell and he had a common enemy in view, the unity both desired would not be jeopardised, though each favoured a different plan of attack. But there was nothing of the sophist in the Irish leader. He could hold the Irish as a master; probably in no other way. He could be a dictator or nothing. At any rate, there must be no other leader, and the sooner that was recognised the better for all concerned.

Davitt made his second incursion into Ulster in August, 1883. At Draperstown, Co. Derry, he addressed himself to the Rescript from Rome against the Parnell Tribute, but to point the moral of its failure in the Protestant atmosphere of Ulster was too obviously opportunism. The Orange bird was not to be caught with such chaff as that. He again toured England on land nationalisation, and one of his biographers notes as "perhaps the nearest approach to a definitely socialist pronouncement to be found in his speeches," this utterance at St. James's Hall, in London. "The individualistic civilisation of the present system denies to the million the possibility of giving play to what is good in human nature, by putting its passions and selfishness into deadly activity in a cut-throat competition for wealth." Whether that enunciation brought him any appreciable distance to Karl Marx is, however, an uninteresting question. More to our purpose was his description at Clonmel, in January, 1884, of the National League as an incomplete organisation, and his suggestion that it should be perfected, so that the people might be led into habits of self-government and taught to rely upon their own power in every particular locality as well as in the country at large, and to act with prudence and resolution "whenever a good opportunity" presented. Back again in England, his platform at Newcastle-on-Tyne, on February 12, was attacked by a gang of rowdies, and a free fight, during which Davitt faced the mob with a revolver in his hand, lasted upwards of an hour before the rout of the roughs. Davitt's behaviour all through the riot, for it was nothing else, was admirable. He exhibited self-possession and courage, and held his ground against the violent disturbers until his friends had restored quiet in the rough-and-ready way customary on such occasions. The trouble was caused by "extreme" politicians, who, as Davitt gently observed,

had been more careful of themselves than he had been in the cause of Ireland. He declined to accompany Henry George on a lecture tour in Scotland lest his presence might handicap the American propagandist, but spoke with him in the Antient Concert Rooms, Dublin, on April 9.

Parnell at length decided to act. On St. Patrick's Day he had stated his position in attractive and plausible style. "I do not depend upon the good wishes of any section of the English," he said. "Some people (and this was a rap at Davitt) desire to rely on the English democracy. They look for a future movement among the English democracy. But I have never known any important section of any country which has assumed the government of another country to awaken to the real necessities of the position until compelled to do so. Therefore I say, do not rely upon any English party. Do not rely even upon the great English democracy, however well disposed they may be towards your claims. But rely upon yourselves, upon the great power which you have in every industrial centre in England and Scotland, upon the devotion of the sea-divided Gael, whether it be under the Southern Cross or beyond the wide Atlantic. But, above all, rely upon the devotion and determination of our people on the old sod at home." A beautiful but preposterous isolation if interpreted without mental reservations.

The freedom of the City of Limerick was conferred upon Davitt on April 14. Parnell, it has been stated, refused to honour the ceremonial with his presence, though why he should have attended on such an occasion is not quite apparent, and, in any event, two of his most respected colleagues were also made freemen the same day, and it is not likely he would have done anything that could have been construed a slight to them. On April 15, when the freedom of Drogheda was conferred on himself, he declared war upon Davitt, formally and unequivocally, and in language which left no one in doubt that the Father of the Land League could now, if he wished, have a fight to a finish. Never was an issue put to the people in plainer terms: "It is necessary for me to take advantage of this occasion," said Parnell, "to warn you against elements of future difficulty, elements of possible future difficulty, and possibilities of grave disunion in our ranks which may be obviated by a timely declaration. I refer to the project termed the nationalisation of the land; and in dealing with this question I don't wish to intrude upon you anything of a personal character. I prefer, as I always have done in public life, to deal with principles and not with men. I have shown you two planks

of the platform of the Land League—the destruction of rack-rents and of landlord oppression and evictions, and the facilitation of occupying ownership by the tiller of the soil. Well, unmindful of this fact, we have been recently informed upon distinguished authority at a meeting in Dublin that we have been false to the spirit of the Land League; that we are unmindful of its principles, because we refused to desert that which has been our programme up to the present moment and follow this new craze. Ownership of land by anybody, we are told, is theft. Whether that anybody be landlord or tenant it is equally a crime and a robbery, and because we refuse to agree with that sweeping assertion we are condemned as slack, and as yielding basely to the present Coercion Act. The desire to acquire land is everywhere one of the strongest instincts of human nature, and never more developed than in a country such as Ireland, where land is limited, and those who desire to acquire it are numerous. I submit, further, that this desire to acquire landed property, and the further desire to be released from the crushing impositions of rack-rents, was the very basis and foundation of the National Land League, and that without it, although not solely owing to it, we never could have progressed or been successful. As reasonably might we have supposed that we could have persuaded the poor man that it was with him a crime to endeavour to hope for the ownership of the holding he tilled. No more absurd or preposterous proposition was ever made to a people than, after having declared on a thousand platforms by a million voices that the tenant should be the owner of his holding, that after this declaration had been agreed to by a million of our own countrymen in England, America, and Australia, after having, with unexampled success, proceeded forward on these lines for five years, we should quietly turn round, retrace our steps to the starting post, and commence anew a movement which should be wanting in every element and prospect of success.” He then maintained that he stood by the position he took up in 1879, which he still thought they would be able to make good, and he repeated a dictum he had used in his American tour: “You must either pay for the land or fight for it.” His parting shot at Davitt was even more deadly. “Constitutional agitation and organisation can do a great deal to whittle down the price that the landlord asks for his land.” thus he concluded, “but it must be paid unless you adopt the other alternative, which I say nothing about. We are told of some great wave of English democracy which is coming over here to poor Ireland to assist the Irish

democracy. The poor Irish democracy will have, I fear, to rely upon themselves in the future as they have had to do up to the present moment. The land question of Ireland must be settled by the Irish people at home." A rather nasty suggestion in the speech was that of a fancied plot to use the artisans of the towns against the peasantry. A wiser thought and a truthful prediction was that the settlement of the land question must precede Home Rule.

This speech, in a very literal as well as a figurative sense, sent Davitt to Jericho. But it would have been well for Ireland if Parnell in 1890 had recalled and emulated the example of Davitt in 1884. Davitt was not a man whom a speech or two could have disposed of, had he chosen to accept the challenge thrown down to him. He was a powerful factor, and he had devoted and influential admirers. He alone had held back Ford, of the *Irish World*, and a host of Irish-American politicians. Elements that obeyed Davitt were no longer favourable to Parnell. Whatever his chances in Ireland, there was absolutely nothing in the world to prevent Davitt at this juncture creating a formidable and active anti-Parnellite Party in America, diverting substantial financial help from the Irish leader and causing serious disunion in the Irish forces. But Davitt valued Irish units as much as, perhaps more than, Parnell himself. He was probably a better patriot, too. Besides, he had a real appreciation of Parnell's political capacity, and Mr. Barry O'Brien suggests that he had felt the charm of his personality. At any rate, when Davitt saw surely that Parnell meant fight upon this issue he stood aside. His action at that moment preserved the unity of the Irish movement, and probably saved the entire situation. Nor does he appear to have brooded over his rebuff. "Parnell and I differed seriously," is his own remark, "but we remained fairly good friends almost to the end."

Davitt's life at this period was one of grinding toil. He had to earn his bread with his pen alone, and only one who has chanced upon a similar destiny can know what penal servitude it implies. He was, fortunately for himself, able to secure journalistic connections that brought him a fairly regular income, but his health was wretched, as a result of constant toil. It is true he might not have condemned himself to this killing existence, but I have already spoken of his morbid dread of being beholden to anybody in the way of money, and especially of accepting any monetary recompense for his political services. Between Parnell and him there is the most startling contrast in regard to such affairs,

but Parnell's attitude was that of common-sense, Davitt's was magnificent, but utterly unreasonable. While he was in Portland Prison some admirers in New York had subscribed a tidy sum of money as the nucleus of a fund for him on his release. They got permission from the Government to ask him how they should dispose of it meanwhile. Davitt's reply was in a sense as thankless as Parnell's speech on the night he was handed the Tribute. He told them he was wholly unconscious of any pecuniary loss sustained by him that should call for any such action on their part. Neither could he imagine any contingency in his personal affairs that would need any monetary assistance outside his own resources, and he, therefore, told them they would be consulting his wishes if they were to apply the amount in hand "for the well-being of the Irish people." It is not easy to refrain from thinking that such a punctilious and prudish disinterestedness richly deserved to have to work for its living.

Partly for the sake of his health, and no doubt also to avoid a conflict with the Irish chief, he decided to take a tour abroad. Such a man, even on holidays, must keep his hand in, and his idea was to deliver a series of lectures in Australia. It was thought that he contemplated settling under the Southern Star, and the notion made some of his friends needlessly indignant. One of them proposed to avert the loss by persuading Davitt to enter Parliament. His disqualification to sit in the House of Commons would end in 1885. There were other suggestions coupled with this one—hysterical and inappropriate. There was quite a hubbub over the rumour and a noble letter of appreciation came from Archbishop Croke. But Davitt brushed the whole affair speedily away. He announced that he had no intention of residing outside of Ireland, that he would not enter Parliament, and would not accept any testimonial of any kind whatever. He was happy to know that he had done something to reduce wrong and to alleviate suffering. He drew no distinction between work within and work outside of Westminster Palace. Membership of the Commons was "no reflection upon the principles of an Irish Nationalist." At the same time it would be a serious risk to the future if a seat in Parliament should come to be regarded as "the one means by which every Irish Nationalist of any prominence in the popular movement is expected to do most service for Ireland." He, at all events, was more firmly convinced than ever that the full measure of Irish rights could be achieved only by the intelligent and determined combination of the people and "the concentration of the

great moral forces at our command." He now left Ireland, and was away until the summer of 1885. In the interval he travelled through Egypt, Palestine, and Italy, and returned greatly improved in health.

CHAPTER XLI.

FROM COERCION TO FRANCHISE AND HOME RULE.

LORD SPENCER became as unpopular in Ireland as Forster had been, and probably the cause was not so much the general administration of the Coercion Act as the palpable jury-packing to which the Crown Prosecutors resorted to secure convictions. In at least one case, too, it was very generally felt that he ought to have commuted a death sentence in consequence of the bad conduct of the jury. But the Viceroy had a really terrible time in Ireland. There were not only the general disorder and the terrifying revelations at the trials of the Invincibles, but in the police forces there were unrest and agitation, culminating in a strike and rioting. It was a discreditable episode, but does not concern us here. Lord Spencer considered it unsafe to journey about without a numerous guard, and whenever he went through Dublin he rode in the centre of a blazing escort of cavalry.

Meanwhile the Liberals were making ready to fulfil one of their electoral pledges. The Parliamentary constituency, in spite of periodical tinkering, remained inadequate for the just expression of the national opinion. A measure of wide enfranchisement was inevitable, but the question that concerned Parnell was Ireland's part in the reform. He was the one statesman who saw with absolute accuracy what was bound to follow enfranchisement in Great Britain. The next General Election, he declared boldly, would be decided by the Irish vote in England. He was equally clear about results in Ireland. Liberals thought a Franchise Act would help their party in that country. Parnell knew that it would help him alone.

Gladstone now proposed to add to the English constituency 1,300,000 votes, to Scotland 200,000 to Ireland 400,000. It was an immense step forward. A Redistribution of Seats Bill accompanied it. The House of Lords would not swallow the pill, and what many thought the most excellent chance that had ever presented itself of settling the problem of the hereditary chamber occurred. It was one of the questions warmly discussed in its relation to Ireland. It was asked, for instance, whether Irish support should be given in the

campaign of the Liberals against the peers. The Liberals were not liked at the moment. The Irish members were lying in wait for the Government. They did actually compass their defeat. But Davitt had no illusions about the affair. Before leaving Ireland he had addressed some meetings, and he gave unequivocal advice on this question. The Irish people of Great Britain, he said, are Democrats as well as Nationalists. "To my mind the advice tendered to the Irish people of Great Britain, not to agitate against the Lords because the English and Scotch are doing so," was even more ridiculous than to suggest that "the Irish members should retire from Westminster, and leave the English and Scotch members to settle the affairs of the Empire between them." The House of Lords was Ireland's deadly enemy; it was the only place in Parliament where Irish landlordism had any political influence; it was the representative of the hereditary principle, "the political and social curse of the people," and that was enough to determine Davitt's attitude. In any event, Gladstone was no red shirt. He took pretty good care there was no revolution beyond the scope of his Bills. The fight raged; the Queen intervened; a conference was arranged; and all ended happily.

Ireland was in the new Act. A malignant effort was made in the Commons to withhold the vote from the rural householders. There were probably some who saw distinctly the gigantic issue involved. It was nothing more or less than the whole question of the government of Ireland; for assuredly, if Ireland now got the power to return between eighty and ninety honest Home Rulers to Parliament, an Irish Parliament became only a question of time. At least one Irish Tory pierced through to the inevitable. David Plunket rose to prevent the enfranchisement of his fellow-countrymen. He had inherited the golden voice and captivating manner of the greatest of Irish orators, and he spoke as if eloquence were bred in the bone. He ended an impassioned appeal, which only lacked a good cause to make it worthy of the illustrious name he bore, with the pregnant and prophetic phrase—"the fatal Franchise Bill." The Act was indeed fatal to all that Plunket spoke for. Its passage made Home Rule certain. Parnell was in high delight. Already he had his members reckoned. Already he had partitioned Great Britain. Already he held the balance of power.

The first exercise of his power as dictator on the hustings was felt in Tipperary. A vacancy occurred, and he nominated Mr. John O'Connor, from Cork. Local feeling was

annoyed. A convention in the constituency put forward a neighbour, Mr. O'Ryan, for the O'Ryan country. On the surface it was a very small matter, but Parnell did not want to have on his hands seventy or eighty small matters of the kind at the approaching General Election. Besides, it seemed a plausible, a natural, and, indeed, a laudable thing for a constituency to desire a "local man" for its representative in Parliament. But although in itself a small point of difference, it would become both large and dangerous when multiplied by eighty. Above all, Parnell required to control the elections so that he might control the enlarged party he was now certain to secure, and he probably looked upon it as fortunate that the contention should be tested and settled once and for all at such an opportune moment. He bided his time. On January 7, 1885, he hastened to Thurles; his nominee was accepted, and the dispute ended. Next day he put the case with characteristic precision and clearness, without any embellishment and without any argument. He had been told when he sought a seat in Meath that he was not a Meath man, but the Nationalists of Meath did not tell him so. When he sought a seat in Cork, he was not told he was not a Cork man. The whole question was whether a man was a good Irishman. O'Ryan had shown himself a good Irishman by retiring from the contest, and O'Connor would prove himself a good Irishman in Parliament. It was all quite simple. The benevolent dictatorship was perfectly irresistible. What is more, it was the only feasible method at the time, and Parnell knowing that, was absolutely determined that its behests should be obeyed.

The chief now made a flying tour in the south, ending up at Cork, with that famous and imperishable declaration, some of which in letters of gold still speaks from the granite shaft of his monument in Dublin: "We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, with its important privileges and wide, far-reaching constitution. We cannot, under the British Constitution, ask for more than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament. But no man has the right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation. No man has a right to say, 'thus far shalt thou go, and no further,' and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall."

The Government majorities were dwindling. Under great difficulties Gladstone had held his team together, and done useful work since 1880. The coercion of Ireland is the one indefensible blot on the *régime*. Between Egypt and Ireland the aged Premier, he was now in his seventy-fifth year, had

many worries. Chamberlain, too, was leading a veritable riot of Radicalism. The Irish members voted constantly against the Government. The Ministerial majority fell to fourteen. Gladstone remarked "That will do," when he heard the numbers, and the straits of the Cabinet could not be more plainly indicated. The Coercion Act would expire in August. There had been no new conquest of Ireland. A conspiracy had been annihilated, and Nationalists were as glad for that as Unionists; disorder had abated in violence, and that is what Parnell willed, but the riddle remained. Gladstone acknowledged the Government had no moral force behind them in Ireland. It was suspected that the Tories had begun a flirtation with the Irish leader. Gladstone announced in May that certain clauses of a valuable and equitable description in the existing Coercion Act would be continued. Lord Randolph Churchill "declared himself profoundly shocked that so grave an announcement should have been taken as a matter of course." A moment of almost supreme significance had come for Ireland. Parnell's health had not been at all good since his imprisonment. At times he was far more unwell than the public ever learned, but his activity at intervals was vigorous enough to suit the exigencies of the hour. For the most part he allowed others to move about in the limelight. Mr. Justin McCarthy was acting for him at this period. The Tory leaders resolved that "in the absence of official information they could see nothing to warrant a government in applying for a renewal of exceptional powers." This was conveyed to Mr. McCarthy. There was a going back and forward, but whether there was a pledge or a compact or an understanding has been in dispute. The incident is full of instruction. It is at such a moment that the student can learn something valuable about the realities of party politics. The Tories sending emissaries to the hated Irish, bringing messages for the ear of the arch-conspirator Parnell, holding out hopes of the abandonment of coercion: that is what was going on behind the scenes, while the Orange Lodges were saying their night prayers before pictures of Lord Salisbury and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

Within the Cabinet something equally significant was happening. Chamberlain was again the moving spirit, with Captain O'Shea as satellite. The revolutionary from Birmingham says O'Shea came and told him Parnell was anxious for some sort of settlement. The Kilmainham Treaty had broken down hopelessly, and O'Shea said; "Do not you think that you and Parnell ought to try and come

together again, and to see if it is possible to do anything on the subject of Ireland?" Chamberlain replied that he was willing. He then proposed "the National Councils Scheme," the main idea being that a central body in Dublin should take over the administrative work of all the boards then existing in Ireland, and also deal with land and education. "It was a very big scheme," said the author fourteen years later; "perhaps it was too big a scheme."

The Cabinet was divided. The questions that disturbed them were—the renewal of coercion, a Land Purchase Bill to make the coercion palatable, and this new scheme of local government. The supporters of the Ministry in the Commons and even some members of the Cabinet were angry with coercion. It is quite plain that both Gladstone and Chamberlain perceived that the battle now in progress, away from the public eye, in Downing Street and its purlieus was virtually the battle for and against Home Rule for Ireland. The inevitable result of the whole great struggle upon the Union is more clearly patent in this historic incident than in any other with which I am acquainted.

Gladstone had been drawing nearer and nearer to Home Rule. He was now strongly in favour of "some plan for a central board of local government in Ireland on something of an elective basis." Failing "a strong measure of local government," he was convinced that there would have to be "an ignominious surrender in the next Parliament after a mischievous and painful struggle." There was a lot of something very like wrangling in the Cabinet. Six out of eight Commons Ministers supported Chamberlain. "Ministers were aware from the correspondence of one of them with an eminent third party," writes Morley, "that Mr. Parnell approved of the scheme, and in consideration of it would even not oppose a very limited Crimes Bill." The decision was taken on May 9. There was a full Cabinet. Of all the peers, only Granville supported it. Hartington alone of all the Commoners opposed it. It could not be carried. As the Ministers separated, Gladstone said to one, "Ah, they will rue this day;" to another, "Within six years, if it please God to spare their lives, they will be repenting in sackcloth and ashes." To Lord Spencer he wrote: "It will quickly rise again, as I think, perhaps, in larger dimensions." The prophet in this case had the power to fulfil his words.

Finally, the Cabinet were at loggerheads over coercion coupled with land purchase, and Chamberlain and Dilke threatened to resign. There were hints of retirement from

Gladstone also. He was in advance of Chamberlain and Dilke on the question of Irish local government, and he was ominously underlining the "*new state of affairs*" in a letter to Hartington. Then came the decision to invest the Viceroy by statute with power to enforce the procedure clauses of the Crimes Act relating to venue, special juries, and boycotting.

Gladstone scented a coalition between the Irish and the Tories, and he told the Queen so, though not, of course, in these terms. The debate on the Budget, on June 8, was concerned with an amendment moved by Hicks-Beach. It does not matter what it was about. It was, in fact, a mixture of beer, spirits, wine, real property, and rates. The important thing is that the Irish voted with the Tories, and left the Government in a minority by 12 votes. Thirty-nine Nationalists voted in the majority. Coercion was killed.

Even before the new Ministry was formed, Chamberlain went down to Holloway, and raked the whole system of Irish government fore and aft—a system, he said, founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently, as in a hostile country. He compared it with Russian government in Poland, with Austrian rule in Venice.

"I say," he exclaimed, "the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle." Lord Salisbury was the new Premier; Lord Carnarvon the new Viceroy of Ireland. It was the Lord Lieutenant who announced in Parliament the Irish policy of the Government, an event unique in the annals of the legislature. All that ensued from this starting point is highly instructive and entertaining, and most amusing in its revelation of opinions held by each of the great British parties concerning the political morality of the other. Lord Carnarvon, to put the matter in a nutshell, set forth an alternative to that exceptional and coercive legislation under which England, with scarcely a break, had tried to rule Ireland since the Union. There was surely a better solution to "this terrible question." He had seen the English, Irish, and Scotch pull together in the Colonies, obedient to the law and the Crown, and working for the general prosperity of the State. Why not here at home? He, in fact, put it to the country through Parliament that the abandonment of coercion would tend to the amity of "the two nations." Needless to say, this important announcement alarmed not a few reputable knights in the Tory camp, but they were brushed aside with the assurance that Lord Salisbury was informed by persons well acquainted with Ireland

that they could carry on the administration with the ordinary law.

But the Tory Government went even further. Parnell was master of the situation. He pressed all his advantages. Lord Spencer's Viceroyalty had seen the scaffold deluged with blood. Unfortunately several of the convictions had been obtained by means which have left their effect upon the populace ever since. All faith in the administration of justice was lost by the people through the jury-packing of that calamitous period. Some of the executions produced the most painful and unsatisfactory impression on the public mind. Forty men had been sentenced to death; twenty-one of the prisoners were hanged. It was claimed that six of these cases called for further investigation. Parnell went in boldly with a motion, calling attention to the way the Viceroy had administered the criminal law, and demanded an inquiry into certain of the convictions. The demand was not actually granted, but it was promised that the Lord Lieutenant would examine carefully any memorials or statements submitted to him. Sir William Harcourt denounced all this, and well he might, as a reflection upon the government of Lord Spencer and the administration of justice, but the Tories knew that as well as he. Hicks-Beach declared that he must say very frankly that there was much in the Irish policy of the late Government for which, though in the absence of complete information he did not condemn, he should be very sorry to make himself responsible. Lord Randolph Churchill was even more emphatic. "The Government," he observed, "will be foredoomed to failure if they go out of their way unnecessarily to assume one jot or tittle of responsibility for the acts of the late administration." Undoubtedly, he assured all whom it concerned, they were going to inaugurate a change of policy in Ireland. The policy of the Liberals had xasperated, maddened, and irritated an "imaginative and warm-hearted race." No amount of bayonets or military would have prevented outbreaks under the Liberals.

But the crowning recantation—for, in fact, the Tories had been as rampant for coercion as the Liberals—came from the august lips of the head of the house of Cecil. No Nationalist member has ever uttered a more effective proof of the futility of coercion. The effect of the Crimes Act, he averred, had been much exaggerated. In spite of it, branches of the League sprouted by the thousand. It availed little against boycotting, and really that was a crime which could be reached with extreme difficulty by any kind of legislation at all. Nor did it diminish outrages. There were more out-

rages with than without the Act. "The truth about boycotting is," he went on in a most illuminating dictum, "that it depends upon the passing humour of the population." Gladstone, some time later, was to add to the literature of boycotting the equally historic and illuminating definition of "exclusive dealing." That was the spectacle which by turns amused, disgusted and embittered Ireland. What was to be thought of government by such parties who thus rounded upon each other, and thus, to all intents and purposes, denounced their predecessors as unjust and incompetent men, in order to secure Irish support in the Commons? The scaffold had drunk blood till it was soaked in all its timbers. Here were Tory members of their own accord scrubbing their hands in public lest a stain of responsibility for it all, or any part of it, should be detected upon them. And then, across the street, was the other spectacle of hundreds of members of Parliament, John Bright amongst them, leading Spencer, the administrator chiefly impugned, to a sumptuous consolatory banquet in retort. To complete the huge and varied historical canvas, there was Hartington sufficiently roused to tell his constituents that the Tory Ministry by their gyrations had dealt a heavy blow "at political morality."

Shortly after this—in the summer of 1885—the famous Carnarvon interview took place. Few incidents of the time created such keen interest and excited such sharp controversy, but the clouds and mists that once surrounded the affair have been banished, and there is no longer any mystification about it. I will not enter into the details. Mr. Barry O'Brien has made the subject peculiarly his own. With the aid of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, he has elucidated all its difficulties, and made what was obscure as clear as anything of the kind could be. It would be as unfair as it is unnecessary to encroach on his preserve. Lord Carnarvon had long been an earnest and honest student of the Irish problem. He was a progressive Conservative. He was a lover of justice and a hater of oppression. For many years he had been in correspondence with Sir Charles Gavan Duffy on Irish affairs. Beyond all question, and largely under the tutorship of that great and sagacious Irishman, he had become a Home Ruler, and greatly desired to bring his party into agreement with his views. Had he been a sterner character, with a safe seat and a fair degree of influence in the House of Commons, it is not at all unlikely that he would have succeeded. As it was, he was in dread of the time. There was an election almost overdue. No one knew how parties would return from the country. He did not like to risk a "premature

step." He was content to pursue that convenient course of the faint-hearted statesman, the process of educating opinion meanwhile. He was in that frame of mind when he became Irish Viceroy. The Under-Secretary, Sir Robert Hamilton, Mr. Burke's successor, was something of a Home Ruler too. Ireland often has good friends in the queerest and most unexpected places.

Lord Carnarvon for a good while had entertained the idea of having a chat with Parnell, in order to learn "the limits and conditions to which the Nationalists would consent if a statutory Parliament were created." Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Sir Howard Vincent, and Mr. Dwyer Gray, the owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, were involved in the events that followed. Parnell was approached on the subject. It was necessary that the affair should be managed quietly, but he insisted that there should be no mystery. The Viceroy and the Irish chief met at the house of Lord Carnarvon's sister in Grosvenor Square. It was the month of July. The family were away. The carpets were up. Parnell, who could not help being dramatic on occasion, said afterwards the meeting took place in an empty house. He was technically right perhaps. The two men talked together on Ireland. It is curious how greatly recollections of the same incident vary. But, after all, who has ever remained imperturbably clear about the minutiae of an hour's animated chat? Parnell would have it that what passed gave him "reason to know that the Conservative Party, if they should be successful at the polls, would have offered Ireland a statutory legislature with a right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with the settlement of the Irish land question" on a large scale.

Lord Salisbury knew of this significant parley. He was good enough to say that Lord Carnarvon had conducted the meeting "with perfect discretion." A year later Parnell, in the course of a debate in the House, let out the secret. Even from the point of view of good business, his unprovoked disclosure is wholly indefensible, but Parnell had his own opinion of English statesmen and politicians in their dealings with Ireland, and there was the dazzling temptation of revealing the venality of British parties. There does not seem to be any good ground for believing that he was correct in his view that "an offer" was made, and it is certain that Lord Carnarvon came out of the affair without discredit, but all the assertion in the world would not suffice to disprove that the Tory Government were, as a matter of fact, con-

sidering seriously the possibility of adding a Home Rule plank to their platform. Parnell was not an ordinary man, but he is not to be blamed for taking the view of an ordinary man; and it is only necessary to ask what any ordinary man would have said had he known that the Irish Lord Lieutenant had, without any overtures from the other side, sought out the Irish leader to ascertain what kind of Home Rule he would accept, to recognise how reasonable were Parnell's inferences. He now knew positively that Home Rule from the Tories was not by any means an unthinkable proposition. He was not aware that Lord Salisbury had decided, just like his nephew, Mr. Balfour, twenty years afterwards, that the arithmetic of the situation was disturbed by the count of Ulster members and uncompromising British Unionists. Fresh from Hatfield, the Viceroy told Sir Charles Gavan Duffy: "We might gain all your promise in Ireland by taking the course you suggest, but we should lose more in England."

From "the stop-gap Government," as Chamberlain called them, Parnell got, however, the Ashbourne Act, another great step towards the transfer of the land of Ireland from the landlords to the tenants. The programme of the illegal Land League was getting into the Statute Book with astonishing rapidity.

But all minds were now fixed on the electoral struggle which was sure to come before the end of the year. As early as July, arrangements began for the allurements of the "free and independent electors," more numerous than ever this year, and when the House rose in August Parnell crossed over to Avondale and his shooting-lodge at Aughavanagh, away near Aughrim, in the highlands of Wicklow. He had his programme ready. The land question had been well advanced, and now that the Tory Viceroy was whispering about an Irish Parliament it was obviously the moment for concentration upon the vital question, for the settlement of which he had taken off his coat. I do not think it can be seriously denied that Parnell found the agrarian problem a most disagreeable necessity. Self-government was his aim. It was his first and constant inspiration. He spoke at Dublin, and ran up his flag to the mast-head. "You have done miraculously well," he told his fellow-countrymen, "and we hand to our successors an unsullied flag, a battle more than half won, and a brilliant history." Now they would have but one plank, "and that one plank National Independence." It was no longer merely a question of self-government, but of how much self-govern-

ment they could be cheated out of. He spoke by the book. He knew the Viceroy's mind. He knew how far Chamberlain was willing to go. He probably knew what Lord Randolph Churchill would like to do. He did not require as much political discernment as he certainly possessed to be able to foretell that Gladstone would go at least as far as any of them.

Parnell's speech was received in the customary way. The English newspapers wrote portentous rubbish about it, and English statesmen contented themselves with saying impossible in various degrees of emphasis. Parnell had great cause for quiet laughter during these days. Neither press nor politician troubled him. He spoke to the sentiment of Ireland a Nation at the Mansion House Dublin, and ridiculed their "impossible." He it was who had at present the option in that exasperating word. He would make everything impossible for those who tried to make it impossible for Ireland to secure self-government. These men had not squelched the Irish in the last five years. They were not likely to squelch them in the next five. And then he uttered another of those short passages which pulled the mystery from the heart of problems and set it clear in a single sentence: "They will either have to grant to Ireland the complete right to rule herself, or they will have to take away from us the share—the sham share—in the English constitutional system which they extended to us at the Union, and govern us as a Crown colony." In half a hundred words he had stated the irresistible reason why Home Rule was inevitable. From his point of view it did not seem to matter much which alternative the English tried: "By the adoption of either," he just remarked, "we should ultimately win, and perhaps win a larger and heavier stake than we otherwise should." Again, English politicians said No in various keys and contortions, but Parnell felt sure that before many weeks Whigs and Tories would be bidding for his help in terms of Home Rule.

Gladstone's Hawarden Manifesto and Salisbury's speech at Newport were the next events of importance leading up to the electoral fray. The Seer of Hawarden did not say "Home Rule," but it was evident he meant it. No one attached any importance to such grandiloquence as the old man was able to hang round "supremacy," "unity," and "authority," but everybody could read the future between the lines when he said: "Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a

source of danger, but a means of averting it." Salisbury's speech was, indeed, remarkable. He asserted, for instance, in terms that did not lack clearness, that the creation of a great central governing body in Ireland would be safer than local and county government. He touched upon one of Parnell's references to Austria-Hungary—imperial federation, as the Premier explained—and he added, and it was certainly a most pregnant equivocation at the very least : "With respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or any suggestion which gives me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any substantial solution of the difficulties of the problem." If words meant anything like what the dictionary said, if the import of language has any claims upon the statesman, then upon Home Rule Lord Salisbury had at this period an open mind or he had nothing. As significant in the very same connection was his excuse for not renewing the Coercion Act. It would have been grossly inconsistent, he said, to follow the extension of the franchise by coercion. On November 14 Parliament was dissolved, and next day the writs went out for the greatest election in which Parnell had taken part.

CHAPTER XLII.

DAVITT RIGHT—PARNELL WRONG.

PARNELL now had not only the chance, but the necessity, of utilising his political genius on an occasion of the most momentous consequence. He had to select Liberal or Conservative as his fighting partner in the battle. Which should it be? In Ireland there was no difficulty of that kind. There he had to win all out for himself alone. The Irish vote in Great Britain was the crucial factor. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, whose opinion on such questions no man but a fool would despise, and whom Parnell held in great respect, heard that it was decided to make the Irish voters support the Tory candidates. He was much alarmed at what he considered an insensate policy. He narrates that it was difficult to find Parnell, but Dwyer Gray succeeded in doing so, and Duffy proceeds : " I asked Parnell what he was to get from the Tories for Ireland in return for the support about to be given them. He said the new Government were not going to renew Forster's Coercion Bill ; beyond that he did

not know what they meditated. I replied that he ought to know; he was bound, before obtaining the support of Irish voters for candidates, who in Ireland would be often Orangemen, and in England often bigots or blockheads. His support was enormously important to the Tory Party, and to get nothing in exchange for such a boon was not policy or strategy, but childish folly." It was then that the Carnarvon interview was contrived. Sir Charles worked adroitly and hard, but he failed to secure pledges from or through his friend the Lord Lieutenant. It would appear that Parnell himself was more misled than he ought to have been by the chat with Lord Carnarvon. He also seems to have misjudged Lord Randolph Churchill, with whom, strangely enough, he had struck up a grotesque friendship. He had a strong belief that Churchill might be able and willing to work the oracle.

Davitt returned to Ireland towards the fall of the year. He had no doubts about the situation. In view of what occurred five years later, it is interesting to record that it was the land nationaliser who warned the suspicious leader not to trust Churchill and the Tories. The game of playing off party against party, ambition against ambition, had no attractions for this Quixote of Irish politics. He infinitely preferred, if possible, straight play. It might, of course, be asked whether straight play ever won tricks against card-sharpers; Davitt would probably have replied that he would not take a hand with sharpers. But, at the very least, Parnell was Ireland's chief constable, and he was clearly bound to watch and know all about the sharpers who were dealing the cards before his eyes. That he could have anything but a low opinion of them, they themselves in the last year had put out of the question. Some of them had torn political morality to tatters, in public too, and Parnell had no right to think that they were either ashamed or repentant; others of them had shifted about so uneasily as to give the impression of equal guilt.

Parnell need not be blamed for not sharing Davitt's distrust. It might have been a matter to be determined by political instinct, and Parnell had as good a right as any man alive to have confidence in his acumen and penetration. But he was totally wrong and Davitt was absolutely right when it became a consideration of political probabilities. Parnell had brought away from the Carnarvon interchange a notion that he might demand, with hope of success, a Parliament which would have power to impose duties on English imports into Ireland. He could not have more egregiously displayed

his ignorance of the commercial history of the two nations. It may have been that he harboured the far-fetched supposition that the English Tories were still secretly addicted to protectionist heresies, and that they would go even to this length for the sake of their darling doctrines. We have lived to see the party rent in twain over the great economic issue and to witness an imposing electoral demonstration for free trade, but it should not have needed such evidence to convince Parnell that this idea of tariffs in Ireland against England with English consent, nay, with English Tory connivance, was a wild hallucination. Yet that was the idea he formulated publicly in a speech at Wexford. He was not, of course, fresh to the topic, for fully two years before this, at the Cork Exhibition, he had distinctly declared: "I confess I should like to give Ireland the power to protect her own manufactures, and I think if we were able to do that we could succeed in reviving manufactures in Ireland."

Davitt was all his life a practical worker on behalf of Irish industries. Indeed, some of his most fruitful efforts were in that neglected yet attractive field of action, but he surveyed this new policy with a laugh. He made it sufficiently evident to the Irish leader that he believed no such measure would be won from Liberals or Tories.

It is an amusing reminiscence that it was Chamberlain, the arch-protectionist of a later day, who first seized upon this fatuous and needlessly imperilling condition to spike Parnell's gun. Speaking at Warrington, he literally rushed to the attack, so foolishly invited by the Irish leader. "Now, what is Mr. Parnell's programme?" he asked. "He says that in his opinion the time has come to abandon altogether all attempts to obtain further remedial measures or subsidiary reforms, and to concentrate the efforts of the Irish representatives upon the securing of a separate and independent Parliament, which is to consist of a single chamber, and whose first object it will be to put a protective duty against all English manufacturers. Then he says in the second place, that he expects Whig and Tory will vie with one another in helping him to a settlement on his own terms; and he says in the last place, that if any party seeks to make this object impossible, he and his friends will make all things impossible for them. Well, gentlemen, I am not a Whig, and I am certainly not a Tory. But, speaking for myself, I say that if these, and these only, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained I will not enter into competition for it."

But the greatest political mistake of Parnell was to come,

and here again Davitt was right where he was wrong. Mr. Childers, one of the high Liberals, made a speech in September, in which he declared for a very full measure of Home Rule, and even entered into details of reservations to the Imperial Parliament. We know now that he consulted Gladstone before making that speech. "This is the voice of Childers," said Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, "but the hand of Gladstone." It was apparent. Parnell was, of course, perfectly conscious of these startling advances. No English statesman, he said, and very properly, had shut the door; but "Mr. Gladstone's declaration is in my judgment the most remarkable declaration upon this question ever uttered by an English statesman." Gladstone now went to Midlothian, and asked the country to give him—or, for the matter of that, his opponents—a majority independent of the Irish vote. Parnell then crossed to Liverpool, and tried to coax the Nestor of Liberalism to become just a little more explicit. He wanted too much. Upon the data already to hand he had to make up his mind. He was sorely puzzled. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, on November 19, wrote a Manifesto intended for the Irish voters in Great Britain: "a violent and implacable impeachment," this is Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's description, "of the Liberal Party; arraiging them as having coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, and freedom of speech in Parliament." This meant throwing the Irish sword into the Tory scale. Parnell hesitated to sign it. Mr. O'Connor says he "afterwards thought that the hesitation was in some degree due to his unfortunate position in regard to Captain O'Shea." However that may be, the moment came when the decision could be delayed no longer. Parnell was handed the Manifesto. He made but two alterations. He added "and Radicals" to Liberals, so that the ban might be complete. "But," writes Mr. O'Connor, "though he made changes so few, there was a hesitancy about him—an appearance of internal struggle—which was somewhat surprising and disquieting." He signed the fateful document. The Tories got the Irish vote.

It was a deciding and decisive factor. Gladstone was prevented from getting the clear majority he had asked, but the Liberals, under the circumstances, did well. The Irish vote cost them between twenty and forty seats. At the end of the great contest 333 Liberals, 251 Tories, and 86 Parnellites had been elected. Parnell was virtually dictator in more places than Ireland. Out of 89 contests in Ireland he had won 85. All the Irish Liberals and nominal Home Rulers

were simply wiped out. Parnell himself led the attack on Mr. Phillip Callan in Louth, and conducted the campaign with all his old dash. He arrived in the constituency on Sunday, November 29, and gave a wonderful example of the energy of which he was capable. Callan had a numerous and noisy following, and some of the meetings were fractious and turbulent. But Parnell faced hostile crowds, shouted down mobs, led his supporters against all-comers, and threw unlimited vigour into his speeches, delivering fully half-a-dozen in the course of a single day. The bitterness of the contest is sufficiently indicated by a single quotation from one of his numerous harangues. "You Irish people should know your own proverbs," he exclaimed. "There is an old Irish proverb: if you let a pig swim long enough it will cut its own throat." That was the gentle specific he wished them to apply to Mr. Callan. He haunted the constituency until his nominee was placed at the head of the poll.

The Irish chief had fulfilled his prophecy to the very letter, but as we shall soon see, it really meant defeat. Not even Pyrrhus himself ever gained such a Pyrrhic triumph. Why had the chief thrown his weight against Gladstone? I am conscious that my theory is risky, yet I venture to suggest that he was swayed in the last resort by his distrust of the English in general, and by his special suspicions of this particular Englishman. He believed them and him capable of almost any political infidelity. He dreaded a big English majority on either side. He failed to appreciate Gladstone's character and, with less excuse, his circumstances. He forgot to trace the history and development of the old warrior. It was said that it was the result of the election which converted Gladstone to Home Rule. The idea is absurd. Gladstone had been tending to Home Rule for many a day. Half-a-dozen years later he said of himself: "I was brought up to distrust and dislike liberty; I learned to believe in it. That is the key to all my changes." His career was a great development, its method was faultlessly consistent. He walked slowly perhaps, but he never retraced his steps. His work was a political system in itself. The parts were laboriously fashioned and dovetailed with exquisite precision. Such statesmen build better and leave more permanent effects upon nations than the inspirations of genius ever create. Parnell realised to the full the power of Gladstone. He rated it so highly that he suspected him all the more. "You do not know what it is to fight him," he said. "I am no match for him. I could not explain to you what a strain it is to have to fight him. I know it. I have fought

him, and am ready to fight him again, but he knows more moves on the board than I do." There is the clue to the false step. He regarded him as a gambler playing a tricky game. A moment's reflection should have assured him that a man like Gladstone has no time for dishonesty at seventy-six.

Davitt did all he could to avert the policy. He made no concealment of his opinion regarding it. But his was a voice calling in the wilderness, or rather crying out in dissent amidst a babel of approval. Everybody was anxious to have a thrust at Gladstone for the sins of Forster and Spencer. Revenges are the most dangerous and deceptive of political impulses. Davitt was now at variance with the chief and all his followers. Six months later he might have pointed to the figure thirty, by which the Home Rule Bill was lost, as his vindication and their discomfiture. But we are getting on too fast.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN AGONY.

THERE were two squalid incidents in the General Election which are, unfortunately, essential to our story. Parnell crossed to Dublin to arrange some details in the preparations for the coming struggle. However outwardly composed, he must have been very uneasy in his mind. He was only too well aware that he was reaching a critical stage in his relations with the O'Sheas. He was accompanied from England by Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Captain O'Shea. During a short absence of O'Shea from the railway carriage, Parnell remarked: "I suppose the party would not accept O'Shea for Clare again." O'Connor said of course not. At the party meeting there was a wrangle between two of the members. The leader did not interfere except to throw oil on the troubled waters, but the incident is said to have quite unnerved him, though at a dinner the same evening, such was his self-command and will-power, he delivered a robust speech, full of spirit and confidence.

He made Liverpool his headquarters in the campaign. There was one seat in that city which the Irish were certain to win, and did win. Parnell announced his intention of contesting two other divisions, and of standing himself for Exchange Division. An official Liberal candidate had been

replaced by Captain O'Shea in this same division, and in obedience to the Manifesto the Irish attacked his candidature. As a renegade Irishman, O'Shea was indeed specially obnoxious to them. When Parnell's candidature was announced O'Shea was assailed more vigorously than ever. There was also a Tory candidate in the field. On the day of the nominations Parnell retired from the contest, and, at a numerously attended meeting that night, asked, though with evident embarrassment and hesitancy, that O'Shea should be supported. "So great was his power and prestige at the time," says one of the leading Nationalists of the city, "that, whatever apprehension might be felt, no attempt was made to question his action." On the morning of the polling, Mr. John Denvir, who acted as secretary of the Nationalists, went early to the hotel where Parnell and Mr. T. P. O'Connor were staying. He was anxious and uneasy. "What's amiss with you, Denvir?" asked Parnell. "We would like to see Mr. O'Connor on the ground in Scotland Division," was the reply. Parnell shook his head. "Oh, that's the way with him since he got married," said Parnell, archly. "We'll be losing you that way some time," said Denvir, smiling. "No," said Parnell, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "I lost my chance long ago."

When Parnell roused himself to energy there was something of the Fury in his movements. He threw himself into O'Shea's battle with extraordinary and bewildering vehemence. He delivered many speeches, canvassed, pressed others into the service, made frantic efforts to secure victory for the Whig. It was indeed a puzzling spectacle. The Irish had been commanded to touch anything but a Liberal candidate, and here was the Irish leader fighting might and main for a particularly obnoxious Whig. Five years before he had promised Mrs. O'Shea that he would do his best to keep O'Shea in Parliament. Was ever promise redeemed under such torturing difficulties? Alas, a small band of determined Nationalists would not do this thing. They made no parade of their disgust. They simply did not vote. Had O'Shea got all the Irish suffrages in the constituency he would have won. A second and more painful scandal would have been averted. He lost by a few votes.

But Parnell's self-command was sublime. Under the circumstances the blow would have paralysed the spirit of almost any other man. The Irish chief bore it with a serenity which deluded the most suspicious scrutiny. That night he delivered a speech which sent the Nationalists of Liverpool into a frenzy of delight. Thousands craned their necks to see

and hear him. On English soil he stood proudly defiant, as if he dispensed the destinies of not one but many nations. "Ireland has been knocking at the English door long enough with kid gloves," he exclaimed; "I tell the English people to beware and be wise in time. Ireland will soon throw off the kid gloves, and she will knock with a mailed hand."

Mr. T. P. O'Connor was elected for one of the divisions of Liverpool, and also for Galway City. He decided to hold to Liverpool; another election became necessary in Galway. Parnell put off the difficulty from day to day. Galway wanted a member, but the chief would not act. The torturing struggle through which he was passing we can now, at all events, faintly realise. At last one night, at the gate in Palace Yard, he amazed Mr. O'Connor with the news that he would propose O'Shea for the vacancy. When the news spread through the Irish members the party was thrown into a state of panic. It was certainly a most audacious proposal. It was, indeed, not audacity, but the last resort of a desperate man. Unfortunately, nothing could be done before an announcement of the preposterous candidate with Parnell's approval had appeared in the press. It is not necessary to go over the details which have been put on record to excuse and explain acts, to soothe minds and, perhaps, ease consciences. The truth is, nothing could have saved the situation. The Irish Party was powerless, Parnell's resolve brooked no circumvention.

Mr. Biggar and Mr. Tim Healy declared war, hastened to Galway, got a local candidate, and set the city in a blaze. The whole country was amazed, as well it might be. The excitement and consternation spread to America. It was a moment of national agony. Biggar threw himself into the fight like a savage. There was no man of kinder heart or softer nature, but he was fearless, dogged, rough and pugnacious. He stripped Parnell's guilty secret to the world. His words did not, it is true, get into the newspapers at the time, but rumour was not long carrying them afar. In the plainest terms he denounced Parnell's relations with Mrs. O'Shea. To Parnell himself he sent a sinister and prophetic telegram: "The O'Sheas will be your ruin." The gruff Ulsterman had written, "Mrs. O'Shea will be your ruin." Mr. Tim Healy saw the message, seized it, changed it, and saved Biggar from its disgrace.

Parnell's action was indefensible. It was now impugned on disastrous grounds. If the indictment were true, no censure was too scathing for such shameful traffic with an Irish constituency. Nor can we ignore the fact that English

political leaders with whom he expected to be in negotiation before long had been permitted to know something of his domestic entanglement. Assuredly, no leader had ever tried more sorely the confidence and loyalty of his followers. Galway was now ready to reject his nominee. The party, which had just reached a climax of its strength, was in the very throes of disruption. It was Parnell who had caused all this sudden and exasperating trouble, and only Parnell could have subdued it. Never did he display with more consummate power and with more astonishing effect that wonderful assemblage of talents which constituted his gift of leadership—coolness, courage, firmness, assurance, affability, and unruffled calmness in the midst of turmoil, a splendid pride in the midst of distraction, a mastering dignity in the midst of demoralisation, indifference to personal safety, patience and discernment, an adroit management of individuals, swiftness in final resolve, and an infectious eloquence, which hypnotised the understandings of men, and made them into his worshippers and slaves.

While Galway was at fever heat, many of the Irish members were in Dublin at their wits' ends. The distraction was intensified by the difficulty of communicating with the chief. No one knew a private address that would find him. At last the members in Dublin did the right thing. Parnell's leadership had to be preserved at all costs. An address of confidence in him was drawn up, a great many of the party signed it, it was printed in the *Freeman's Journal*, and despatched to Parnell himself. It found him. He announced that he would be in Ireland next morning. He arrived, sent for Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and said he was going to Galway by the first available train, and wanted him to make the journey too. Mr. O'Connor narrates that on the way down he was tranquil and self-possessed, and spoke and acted as if there was nothing strange afoot. Curiously enough, the conversation turned on religion. It is, as far as I am aware, the only known occasion when he disclosed his religious beliefs. He had been, as we have seen, a member of the General Synod of the Irish Protestant Church. It appears that he afterwards attended a chapel of the Plymouth Brethren, and once expressed the view that there was something attractive about their form of worship. During this memorable journey to Galway he surprised his friends by saying that he had lost his faith in religion, but had regained it, and that he now believed in the religion in which he was born.

A howling mob met him in the western city, but he was not

assailed. Mr. O'Connor was singled out for attack, and Parnell at no small personal risk forced his way through the crowd and rescued him. He entered the hotel, went to a room, and made himself neat for the next act in the queer drama. Then he came down to a chamber, where friends and foes were face to face awaiting his presence. He heard the views of the mutineers calmly, and without comment. It was feared, especially by Mr. Tim Healy, that Biggar would insult Parnell to his face, but though he maintained his resistance he did nothing so uncouth. Parnell spoke, and before he had said a dozen sentences he had won back all but Biggar. It might have been wrong to bring O'Shea forward, but he could not now be withdrawn. His leadership was now the question. The success of the Irish cause was, therefore, the issue. Even the suspicion of a revolt against his leadership must be prevented. There were rumours of his resignation in case his nominee were not accepted. "I have no intention of resigning my position," he said, with uncanny composure. "I would not resign it if the people of Galway were to kick me through the streets to-day." There was no more debate within doors. Without, a huge and furious crowd awaited in noisy impatience the result of the conference. Their minds, at any rate, were made up. They would not have O'Shea at any price. Parnell came to the window of the hotel and cast a placid glance over the surging multitude. In spite of cries and murmurs he sent his sharp, penetrating voice to the limits of the crowd. With left hand raised as if in solemn warning, he said: "I have a Parliament for Ireland in the hollow of my hand. Destroy me, and you take away that Parliament. Reject Captain O'Shea, destroy me, and there will arise a shout from all the enemies of Ireland: 'Parnell is beaten; Ireland has no longer a leader.'" The crowd yielded as readily as the mutineers. The weird magic of his strange personality hushed them to silence. The fateful warning thrilled them to obedience. They went away sullen, but subdued. Not a voice of dissent was raised. The command of the seer fastened into their hearts. The revolt was quelled. The great dictator bent the storm to his pleasure. Only a few times in history have such miracles been seen. But the providential lessons of the episode were lost on leader and party alike. The nauseous subject, which had been shouted from the house-tops of Galway, was never again mentioned until the fire and lava had begun to flow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

TREACHERY, TRIUMPH, TROUBLE.

MEANWHILE Lord Salisbury had met Parliament. It is a profitable sport to trace the manœuvres that led up to the meeting of the House, but it is not in our programme. Rumour, this time soundly based, was very busy with Gladstone's intentions regarding Ireland. His determination was to have rigid silence observed, but silence would be the death of politics and politicians. He saw clearly the drift of events. That drift was in the direction of his own sympathy, and his sympathy was backed by his prodigious common-sense. He took a sane if startling view of the situation. There must be a radical change in the system of governing Ireland. The elections in that country were a vast and almost unanimous protest against the old *régime*. That *régime* must end. The voice of Ireland could not, in fact, be any longer ignored. Gladstone knew at once that such thoughts as these led irresistibly to Home Rule, but between that point and a plan of Home Rule his sagacity perceived a wide region, full of forbidding obstacles. He kept sounding his colleagues. Hartington would have none of it. Parnell later on blamed Chamberlain for the catastrophe. It was Hartington who sowed the trouble.

What were the Tories going to do? Their conduct all through replies treachery. Few episodes more disgraceful and dishonourable will be found in the history of political parties. At least one would have expected that the thing they would not propose was coercion. They had, as we have seen, discountenanced, abused, and abandoned it. Yet that is what they actually proposed. They had availed of Irish support to the fullest possible extent. They found it was not sufficient to give them a working margin. They temporised, hoping for a Liberal cave. When that failed them, they did the base and treacherous deed.

Parnell had watched both parties with natural keenness. He was most elusive. To disappear seemed to have become a policy with him. We find Gladstone, in a letter to Hartington, alluding playfully to "Parnell's method of self-concealment." As early as December 17, however, he had evidently made up his mind that he had made a mistake. He wrote to Mr. Justin McCarthy: "The Conservatives, in

shrinking from dealing with the question, in addition to bringing about the speedy destruction of their party, are little regardful of the interests of the Irish land-owning class, since they might have obtained guarantees, which the Liberals, who I am convinced will shortly deal with the question, will have no interest in insisting upon." Parnell had had perhaps some hope of Chamberlain. He was actually involved in the arrangement of an Irish tour for him and Dilke earlier in the year, but Chamberlain soon began that nimble offensive which was to prove so deadly in the great controversy. He went some part of the way. He acknowledged the meaning of the Irish elections—a great majority were earnestly in favour of a change in the administration of their government, and "of some system which would give them a large control of their domestic affairs. Well," he went on, "we ourselves, by our public declarations and by our liberal principles, are pledged to acknowledge the justice of this claim." But—and there was a nasty sting in it—"Mr. Parnell has appealed to the Tories. Let him settle accounts with his new friends. Let him test their sincerity and good-will; and if he finds that he has been deceived, he will approach the Liberal Party in a spirit of reason and conciliation." It was typical of the man. He was not a Liberal or a Radical, but merely an opportunist. He was never on principle in favour of any extension of liberty to Ireland. It is very likely that Parnell at an early stage saw through him. Once, when Mr. Tim Healy told him that Chamberlain had invited him to dinner so that they might discuss Irish affairs, Parnell said "No," and said it in a peremptory way. He himself had been in close communication with Chamberlain, but there were signs of a coolness for some time.

For an old man, Gladstone's speed on the Home Rule question was magnificent. He had fixed in his capacious mind as the root idea of his scheme a Parliament in Dublin. All other things sank to secondary importance. Morley relates, with understandable relish, how the veteran devoured Burke, not for the first time. To the Duke of Argyle it was an alarming symptom. "Your *perfervidum ingenium Scoti* does not need being touched with a live coal from that Irish altar." At the opening of Parliament, on January 12, one of the Liberal leader's friends showed Parnell a cast of the Home Rule Bill. The Irish leader, to the disgust of the other, held on to the paper, and carried it off. A few days later he told the agent that a Bill on these lines would have the support of the Irish. But first it was necessary to get the Tories out. On January 26 they announced coercion.

That same night on an amendment to the Address, the Irish and Liberals linked up, and Salisbury was left in a minority by 79. A disgraceful and unscrupulous *volte-face* was Parnell's description of the conduct of the Tories. On February 1 Gladstone became Prime Minister for the third time. From that moment dates an epoch in the history of the two islands.

Hartington, a dull but influential man, of stagnant principles, would not join the new Government. "Chamberlain and Trevelyan went with me," wrote Gladstone; "their basis being that we were to seek some method of dealing with the Irish case other than coercion. What Chamberlain's motive was I do not clearly understand. It was stated that he coveted the Irish Secretaryship. To have given him the office would have been held to be a declaration of war against the Irish Party." If Gladstone had lived a little distance into the twentieth century he would have appreciated the motive in Chamberlain much better than he probably ever did. The plain man can find but one word for Chamberlain's motive at several points of his tortuous career, and that word is mischief. It is an extraordinary fact that at or about this very time Mrs. O'Shea was, at her husband's request, asking Gladstone to appoint Captain O'Shea Under-Secretary for Ireland. O'Shea had "a great wish" for the appointment, but Gladstone declined to encroach on a colleague's preserves. The aged Premier found it hard to form a Cabinet. Morley's appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland was taken to mean a Parliament in Dublin. Spencer and Harcourt joined. Granville proved stout as oak. "I am well satisfied," wrote the old Liberal warrior to his son Henry. "Yet, short as the Salisbury Government has been, it would not at all surprise me if this were to be shorter still."

Gladstone threw himself into his herculean task with the ardour of a stripling. Only a little over two months were spent in constructing the Home Rule Bill, and a pendant Bill dealing with land purchase. On March 26 a Cabinet Council, fraught with important results, took place. Differences came to a climax, and Chamberlain with Trevelyan resigned. Gladstone went bravely on. Mr. John Morley was the Minister specially deputed to deal with Parnell. No better selection could have been made. The Minister combined honesty of purpose with a clearer insight into history than most men possess—a man of knowledge and common-sense, of sterling liberality, honourable convictions, and a belief in freedom. He knew Ireland's woes, and he felt the shame of them. I gather from one source that Parnell did not like the selection. Efforts were made to put Morley

aside. The story runs thus : " Proposals were once or twice made, not I think at Parnell's desire, for conversations to be held between Gladstone and himself, but they were always discouraged by Mr. Gladstone."

The Irish leader, accordingly, was all along " in free and constant communication " with the Irish Secretary. Morley has put on record his experience with Parnell during this memorable period. He found him, as did others, a good man of business, frank and keen, cautious and clear. His perspective was correct. He made no pretence, recognised difficulties with candour, and never strained at small points. He showed no constructive faculty, and perhaps it was not his business to do so. Above all, " he knew what he wanted." They discussed Irish exclusion from Westminster, the composition of an Upper Chamber, and other details. On these matters Parnell was elastic, but when it came to finance he set his teeth into the affair. " He fought for better terms," says Gladstone's biographer, " with a keenness and tenacity that almost baffled the mighty expert with whom he was matched." Once, and only once, did Gladstone and Parnell meet while the measure was in preparation. On April 5 the two great statesmen sat in Morley's room at the House. " It was all finance," wrote the veteran Premier. From half-past ten till midnight Parnell held him " on the root of the matter." He went on repeating his points: arguing, persuading, enforcing, putting forth all his powers, clinging the whole time to a fraction. The fight was over Ireland's contribution to the Imperial fund, and Parnell maintained that the just proportion was not a fourteenth or a fifteenth, but a twentieth or twenty-first part. " I fear I must go," said Gladstone at last, and as Morley led him into the passage he whispered, " Very clever, very clever." To the very last Parnell hung on to his fraction. " It is not at all improbable," according to Morley, " that if the Bill had gone forward into Committee, it would have been at the eleventh hour rejected by the Irish on this department of it, and then all would have been at an end. Mr. Parnell never concealed this danger ahead." Amongst the things the Irish leader agreed to give up were control of the Customs and direct and continuous representation at Westminster.

The Bill was introduced on April 8. It was one of the historic nights of Parliament. No circumstance was absent that could lend distinction to the occasion. The matchless orator of British Liberalism was at his best. For three and a half hours he held the House spellbound. It was noticed that in this hour of grave and splendid triumph Parnell stole

into the chamber quietly, as if on set purpose to escape an ovation from his delighted followers. It was an hour charged with victory for him—the proof of his genius, the fulfilment of his audacious promise to the Irish race. Yet “nobody could tell from his demeanour,” said one of his lieutenants, “that he was more important than the humblest member of his party.”

Later on there was hot controversy amongst the Irish themselves as to responsibility for and acceptance of the Bill. There need not have been any wrangling. The facts were few, simple, well authenticated. There is no doubt that Parnell did not formally consult his colleagues until the night of April 7, when he called eight of them to the Westminster Palace Hotel and explained the main provisions. There was some criticism. Parnell rose, told them if they declined the Bill the Government would go out, and it was at once agreed to accept it. It was, however, also agreed to reserve for the Committee stage the right of raising and reconsidering the position with regard to the immediate control of the constabulary and the control of Customs. After Gladstone had delivered his memorable speech, Parnell accepted the measure in the spirit and almost in the very letter of this reservation. He complained about the control of the police, the veto power of the Upper Chamber, and finance. He warned the Ministry that he would return later on with his beloved fraction. “There was never any dissembling as to this,” says Morley. Finally, the Irish leader declared that if the Irish views were fairly met regarding the defects he had pointed out the Bill would be accepted cheerfully by the Irish people and their representatives “as a solution of the long-standing dispute between the two countries.”

The Bill was read a first time, and the burning topic of the hour went like wild-fire over the whole country. It was no ordinary fight the grand old man had taken on his venerable shoulders. His dinner-table was deserted by the peers; he was at his wits' end how to put a good face on his table when the heir apparent to the Throne was expected. The Land Purchase Bill was introduced on April 16. It involved the issue of £50,000,000 Consols and the creation of a peasant proprietary. This measure proved a blunder. Nobody liked it. Finally, Gladstone observed that the sands were running in the hour-glass, and if the Irish landlords did not accept his proposal, he would not ask anybody to vote for it.

John Bright declared against both Bills. His devotion to liberty would not ply between Holyhead and Kingstown. But it is hard to understand his attitude. To Gladstone he

wrote that he could not agree to exclude the Protestants of Ireland from the protection of the Imperial Parliament, and a fortnight later he told Mr. Barry O'Brien : " The Protestants of Ireland are very well able to take care of themselves."

The Liberal Party began to split. A proposal to hang up the Bill after the second reading appeared. Parnell took alarm. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, after talking over the matter, threw out the hint that the Bill should be considered as a draft rather than a final proposal. The leader would have none of it. " This is the Bill we want," he cried. A meeting was summoned at the Foreign Office. Parnell wrote a letter, which Morley handed to Gladstone as he was preparing to go to the meeting. " You, of course, are the best judge of what the result may be in England," the missive began, and that opening prepared the way sufficiently for the advice that the Government should go ahead with their measure. Gladstone heard it read, and lost his temper for a moment. At the meeting the Premier tackled the point. They could either hang up the Bill after a second reading and defer the Committee stage until the autumn, he said, or they could wind up the session, prorogue, and introduce the Bill afresh with amendments in October. The Cabinet favoured the second method. That evening Parnell met Gladstone in Morley's room at the House. " Parnell courteous enough, but depressed and gloomy. Mr. Gladstone worn and fagged." The pace was telling. When Gladstone left, Parnell said he might not be able to vote for the second reading if it were understood that the Bill was to be withdrawn. " Very well," replied Morley, " that will, of course, destroy the Government and the policy; but be that as it may, the Cabinet, I am positive, won't change their line."

The next act in the drama was reached when the Tories pressed Gladstone to say what he intended to do. After an exciting interchange, in which the old warrior was as pugnacious as the youngest, it was understood that after the second reading Parliament would be prorogued, and the Bill re-introduced with amendments. On May 29, while the debate on the second reading was in progress, a decision which killed the Bill was taken in Committee Room No. 15, of evil memory. Chamberlain presided over fifty-five Liberals, and they resolved to vote against the Government. The Birmingham leader's opposition we know now was a mere accident, and not a matter of principle and conviction.

The final scene occurred in the early hours of June 8. Some sanguine, sunny-souled friends had hopes of the Bill up to the last moment, but shrewd Parliamentary experts knew that

Chamberlain's cave had sealed its fate. Yet a high standard of debate was maintained till the division bells tingled. Parnell's speech that night was the theme of universal admiration. It is one of his finest performances—finished and adequate in diction, carefully reasoned, confident in its tone, rich and varied in matter. He stooped to no paltry finesse, but with comprehensive gaze surveyed the whole field covered in the debate. There was no evasion of difficulties; on the contrary, he tackled the thorny and prickly clauses, faced the stoutest arguments of his opponents, and singled out the most dangerous adversaries in the arena. The Ulster difficulty and the loyal minority, the finance of the measure—he shirked nothing, and when he had paced the entire ground, he led his listeners through the recent dreadful past; the Coercion Bills, each worse than the one which had gone before; *habeas corpus* gone, trial by jury gone, inviolability of the dwelling gone, freedom of the press gone, and in their stead the Curfew Law and the blood-money of the Norman conquerors.

"All this you have done for the past five years," he said, in grave and solemn accents, "and all this and much more you will have to do again" if the Bill be rejected. Then came the historic dictum: "There is no half-way house between the concession of legislative autonomy to Ireland and the disfranchisement of the country, and her government as a Crown colony." But he refused to believe that such evil days must come, and ended with a thrilling appeal to the Parliament to be wise enough, brave enough, and generous enough to close the strife of centuries, and give peace and prosperity to suffering Ireland.

The great speech was listened to with rapt attention by friend and foe alike. The voice of a master was recognised. Amongst those who heard it was one who scanned in the mind's eye the whole long line of illustrious Parliamentarians, from the Great Commoner until that very moment, and who had nourished and matured his own intellect on the rich political wisdom of Burke. In Morley's opinion, Parnell's speech made the rest of the House look little better than amateurs. It was the chief's last great service to Ireland. With it ends that part of his career which is history; the remainder of his life is merely biography.

The Bill was lost by thirty votes—313 voting for and 343 against. The Government went at once to the country. Parnell counted upon a victory. Before July had passed the returns registered a stunning defeat. Only 191 Liberals were elected. There were 394 Unionists and 276 Home

Rulers returned ; though, significantly enough, the Liberals were only 76,000 votes behind the combined pollings of the Tories and Liberal-Unionists. Gladstone resigned. Salisbury formed a Government. Parnell blamed Chamberlain for the catastrophe. He may have been right, but without a doubt there were other causes. Lord Randolph Churchill had twitted Gladstone as an old man in a hurry, but hurry or no hurry his transformation was, indeed, startling enough to take the breath away. An electorate pays but slight attention to the logical development of a statesman ; it could not avoid rubbing its eyes when that statesman proposed to instal in a separate Parliament the men who a few months before he had described as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire. Such epigrams have an inconvenient way of coming home to roost.

Parnell tried hard to avert the full effects of the disaster. He had an idea that Gladstone might keep in office by allowing the Irish question to lie dormant, and that he should take up registration reform, and dissolve upon it. In place of this, he now found himself trying to persuade a hostile House to pass a new Land Bill. In November he fell ill. For a while he was, in the words of Mr. Tim Healy, " sick unto death." It is probable he never afterwards enjoyed robust health. At any rate, a good deal of history was made in Ireland almost without his knowledge, and certainly without his personal supervision. His aloofness was, however, his own fault, or perhaps it should be said, his misfortune. His contact with the party was often unaccountably slight. Even Mr. Power, the Whip, had to ask Sir Henry Lucy on one occasion whether the leader intended to intervene that night in a debate. In December the Plan of Campaign was started, and a few years later, with the strangest aloofness of vision it is possible to imagine, he came to regard this event as the beginning of the evils which surrounded him. He had based his case for a Land Bill on the fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and he uttered a familiar warning that if his Bill were not adopted there would be trouble in the country. The Tory Government were not particularly anxious for trouble. It was, indeed, their game to prove that they could keep Ireland quiet without having recourse to coercion and without the hope of Home Rule. Parnell also was anxious to have quiet in the country, but when he returned to England, in August, he assured Morley that rents could not be paid that year, and the Government would have to do something if disorder was to be prevented. He had two reasons for desiring quietude : he was not anxious to subject

his movement by an over-dose of coercion, and he considered that it was now the proper policy to ease off the agrarian pressure and push forward the national demand. The Government would do nothing. Rents could not be paid. The landlords would not abate their claims. The Plan of Campaign was adopted. Rents on an estate were pooled. A "fair rent" was offered. If it were refused, the pool became "a war chest" on which to fight the matter out. Parnell was not consulted about it. Its chief originator did attempt to see the chief, but he was too ill. The Plan was already in full swing when he first heard of it, and interference in public affairs was out of the question for many weeks more. There is no reason to doubt that had he been on his feet he would have prevented the Plan. At the earliest possible moment he had a circular issued making it clear that he was in no way responsible for it, and pointedly announcing that he did not profess to express any opinion about it "at present," "as he is desirous of first going to Ireland and having an opportunity of consulting with the gentlemen responsible for its organisation and working." He, in fact, wanted further information with regard to various matters before speaking publicly on the subject. We may now dismiss the Plan of Campaign with the remark that, although crime and outrage were altogether absent, it brought the agrarian agitation back to something very like its old intensity and determination, and had many and most important political effects. It also provoked and, indeed, compelled the Government to renew coercion.

Mr. Arthur Balfour had gone to Ireland as Chief Secretary, and between him and Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. John Dillon a fight of extraordinary bitterness and duration ensued. The two Nationalists became the idols of the people. They were the great central figures of the boisterous drama. They were singled out by Balfour for repeated imprisonments. They suffered a great deal; they faced the risks like men; they attracted and deserved the admiration and affection of the people.

Parnell's subsequent action in connection with the new Campaign is open to the severest criticism. If he had contented himself with saying that he was not responsible for it, and was not in favour of it, he would not only have acted within his rights, but perhaps with propriety. Nor can he be blamed for making his position clear to the Liberal leaders. In December he had two interviews with Morley, who expressed the view that in England the effect of the Plan was wholly bad, and Parnell put him in possession of his views.

He was, however, fully alive to the danger of moderating the agitation once it had begun. If Ireland were to become quiet, the Government would forget all about remedial legislation. But he did make an arrangement for calming the movement. The Government, when the Plan had been in operation for some months, began to tinker at a Land Bill and after a lot of pother, a general revision of judicial rents was decreed. These were the things English Ministers preferred to do last than first.

In the middle of the fight between Dublin Castle and Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien, Parnell decided to speak out against the "Plan." There was a prosecution pending against Mr. Dillon. Coercion was being worked with unremitting energy. The horror at Mitchelstown had been added to the crimes of Dublin Castle. Gladstone was waging Ireland's battle with the spirit of a hero and the strength of a gladiator. If Parnell could not see eye to eye with his comrades in Ireland, one would have expected under the circumstances that he would say nothing unless absolutely forced, and we know how impossible it was to force the chief against his will. Yet he selected an audience of Englishmen at the Reform Club, in London, to hear his public disavowal of the Plan and of all its works and pomps. That it was most successful in protecting the tenants from eviction and in obtaining reductions in rent, he admitted. Why, then, could he not leave well enough alone, since whatever harm there was, was done? His friends and followers were engaged in a desperate contest. There was a time when he would at any cost have rushed to their aid if it were at all possible. There was a time when he most bitterly resented English criticism of his fellow-countrymen, and no doubt he did so still. Yet here he was, the unquestioned chief of the nation, in the most formal and frigid tones disavowing his comrades before a crowd of English Liberals. "I considered, and still consider," he said, "that there were features of the Plan of Campaign, and in the way in which it was necessary it should be carried out, which would have had a bad effect upon the general political situation—in other words, upon the national question." Nor could this repudiation and disavowal have been considered good policy. It was essentially bad policy, and the very next day, speaking in London to an audience of Nonconformist ministers, Gladstone, one of the greatest masters of political strategy, thought it necessary to deliver a defence of the Plan, or at all events, a palliation of it, which ought to have made Parnell wince. Motives have been set down for his action at this juncture. There is nothing easier

to frame for another than a motive. There are few things of which it is harder to be certain. Whatever his motive, his action was unpleasant and impolitic. But the agitation which raged round the Plan forms no part of the life of Parnell, and meanwhile one of the most extraordinary episodes in his career had begun.

CHAPTER XLV.

AMERICA AND MARRIAGE.

DAVITT had seen his advice set at nought, and his fears realised. The Tories had got the Irish vote and had deceived Parnell. Gladstone's majority was too small to withstand Chamberlain's defection. Had Parnell listened to Davitt, how differently things might have turned out; and at the worst, they could not have been as bad as they were now. But he was not the man to derive satisfaction from such reflections. He had been estranged, but in the day of need he returned to Parnell's aid. Immediately after the defeat of the Bill, George Meredith, the great novelist, suggested to Mr. Barry O'Brien that the British public should be charged, prior to the election, "with the cavalry of facts." Davitt had been doing a good deal of that kind of work already. He deplored the neglect by Parnell of the English democracy. He had insisted continually that this was a necessary work, as of course it was; but the unbending Irish leader had an almost unconquerable dislike and distrust of all English things. He had publicly thrown cold water on the idea that Ireland could expect anything from the English democracy. Ireland might and could and would compel redress and concession, but she would not do so by any appeal to the sense of justice and fair-play supposed by Davitt to reside in the English masses. Davitt, on the other hand, had implicit belief in democracy, and he knew, or fancied he knew, English democracy tolerably well. Mr. Barry O'Brien spoke with him of Meredith's suggestion, and it was very grateful to him to hear his own counsel coming from such a quarter. "We have friends in this country," he said, "and we must help them to help us." He pranced off to Parnell, and once again put his views before him, so that when Mr. Barry O'Brien came on the same errand the leader was prepared for him, and consented to a publication committee as an experiment, doling out the necessary money

with anything but a good grace. This was the beginning of a work which has been carried on ever since with remarkable results.

Davitt's next call was to the Irish-American Convention at Chicago, in August. It appears that at this side of the Atlantic there were fears lest the occasion might be used by the physical force party to re-assert themselves. The dynamite campaign had ended in the way in which all these insane enterprises are doomed to end—in detection and imprisonment. The extremists in America were probably feeling sore. Davitt's first effort on landing was to meet John Devoy, from whom he had moved worlds away since 1879. He soon found that Gladstone's policy, or perhaps Parnell's success, had profoundly affected Irish-America. The salving effects of the new policy were already felt. The wand of the wizard had stilled dark thoughts and stayed desperate enterprises, the frown of centuries had been banished from the face of a vast people, and hatreds harboured with the grimmest zeal had given way to hopes of peace and amity. The Convention was an impressive demonstration of the change. The Home Rule Bill was approved, and, so far from discord appearing, the proceedings became like a battle of smiles. Mr. John Finerty did, indeed, make a little trouble, but failed to upset the equanimity of the occasion.

Before returning home, in February, 1887, Davitt married Miss Mary Yore, of Michigan, the ceremonial taking place at Oakland, San Francisco, on New Year's Day. This happy union would have compensated Davitt for even greater sufferings than he had endured. Those who were privileged to meet him in his home spoke in the liveliest terms of its charm and felicity. The marriage was abundantly blessed, and some of its offspring, after academical careers full of interest and honour, have already taken their place in the professional life of Ireland. A marriage gift to his wife, which took the form of a residence at Ballybrack, near Dalkey, and which was called "Land League Cottage," was the only gift from the Irish people which Davitt could ever be induced to accept for services of priceless value. Until the last few years of his life, when some property was bequeathed to his wife by one of her relatives in the United States, he was entirely beholden to his pen for the support of his family and himself.

Davitt did not interest himself very much in the Plan of Campaign. Parnell requested him to keep aloof from it, and he did, until the Administration became outrageously vicious,

when, as usual, he took his share of the risks. He was much occupied with addressing meetings in England and in the Highlands of Scotland, and laying the foundation of an industrial revival, which had very much the same kind of attraction for him that mechanical operations, mining and assaying had for Parnell. Both of them had almost eccentric belief in the financial possibilities of their hobbies. Parnell spent far more than he could afford trying to find phantom metals in Wicklow, and Davitt lost much of his hard-earned money on woollen-weaving and bottle-blowing. He founded a few companies to run such industries, and threw himself into their work with uncommon ardour. It was almost amusing to watch the evidences of his enthusiasm and zeal in the good cause as he swung along the Liffey day after day to and from his business premises; but business men must have read with a smile his ingenuous reflections that the disappointment caused by the paucity of the financial support he received was, perhaps, compensated for by the corresponding diminution of risk. There was nothing of the captain of industry in the Father of the Land League. It was primarily in this industrial interest that he returned to America, in September, 1887, though it is possible the *Times* articles and supposed revelations may have occupied some of his thoughts at the other side of the Atlantic. When he returned, in October, it was, however, the commercial side of his visit of which he spoke. He presided at the first meeting of the Irish Woollen Manufacturing and Export Company, Limited, at 2 and 3 Ushers Quay, two days after his arrival home.

A lecture which he delivered at Limerick in November this year has at least a passing interest, for in it he sketched the probable composition of an Irish Parliament. He adumbrated three groups—a Conservative Nationalist Party, with Parnell at its head; a Democratic or Radical Nationalist Party of two sections, one holding advanced views on social and educational questions and methods of administrative government, and the other having separatist tendencies; and a Pro-English Party. The last-named would occupy, he thought, an enormously important position by reason of its solidarity and numbers, the high education of its members, and the sub-divisions of the other groups. The first would be supported by the Catholic and Protestant churches and by many of the wealthy and influential classes—by the Conservative elements in fact. And as to the middle groups, which would have the support of the small farmers, agricultural labourers and artisans, he did not believe they

would be in any sense irreconcilable to the limited constitution. He criticised Mr. Gladstone's Bill in many particulars, took the view that Irish nationalists and not English parties or leaders should formulate the constitution intended to undo the evils of past misgovernment, and condemned the land purchase scheme, which had done so much injury to the Home Rule Ministry. Amongst the minor interesting occurrences of the year, in which his wife and he took part, was the opening of the bridge connecting Achill Island with the mainland, a work in which he had personally interested himself, and which was named "Davitt Bridge." But an event now befell which took him away from hobbies and enterprises, and absorbed his whole industry and energy in the task of smashing one of the most dastardly plots ever conceived against a nation and its leaders.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE COWARD'S BLOW.

IN close association with the coercion proposals which the Tory Government placed before Parliament in 1887, the *Times* published a series of articles called "Parnellism and Crime." They were of a kind—up to a certain point—with which the public were long familiar, and have been familiar, off and on almost to the present day. The worst that could by any chance be said about the Nationalists and their leaders was said as vehemently as possible. The main design of the series was to establish a connection between the Nationalist organisations and the outrages that had been committed since the foundation of the Land League, and to prove that the real object of the movement was the separation of the two countries. The whole affair was lurid and melodramatic. The author was Mr. Woulfe Flanagan, the son of an Irish judge. Without the help of two other Irish journalists, however, his work would never have been heard of after the day of issue. This sort of thing had been done before, and it has been done since, for the public are supposed to have a very short memory by those who ought to know. On this occasion, however, the *Times* had a sensation in store which was expected to work wonders.

On the morning of the day when the division was to be taken on the second reading of Mr. Arthur Balfour's Coercion Act, the sensation was sprung. A letter, purporting to bear Parnell's signature, was printed in *fac-simile*. It has been quoted hundreds of times, but here it is again :—

“ DEAR SIR—

“ I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned that, though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.

“ Yours very truly,

“ CHARLES S. PARNELL.”

The letter bore the date May 15, 1882. Two short excerpts from the articles will sufficiently show their character and object :—

“ It is true that the numbers of murders and atrocious outrages are not so many as they were in the years of Mr. Gladstone's administration from 1880 to 1883. But this is not the tranquility of law ; it is the desolation of terror. The bloody work of all these years has borne the fruit it was intended to produce. The National League reigns supreme over all the land. Its courts exercise their authority over an intimidated peasantry. A few ignorant and debased ruffians in each district constitute the courts of the National League. The sanctions of their unwritten law are outrage and murder.” And there was this oft-quoted passage :—
“ We charge that the Land League chiefs based their movement on a scheme of assassination, carefully calculated and coolly applied. Be the ultimate goal of these men what it will, they are content to march towards it in company with murderers. Murderers provide their funds, murderers share their inmost counsels, murderers have gone forth from the League offices to set their bloody work afoot, and have presently returned to consult the constitutional leaders on the advancement of the cause.” As to the Phoenix Park murders, it was charged that while absent from Kilmainham Jail on parole, Parnell had met the leading Invincibles, and had probably learned their murderous intentions.

Possibly the only man in England who did not feel a bit put out by this bombshell was Parnell himself. He saw the *Times* at breakfast, glanced at the *facsimile*, put the paper away from him, and spent the forenoon assaying, in pursuit of those long-sought signs which were to produce a gold fever

in the Garden of Ireland. In the evening he dropped into the inner lobby of the House, and in answer to a journalist who was well acquainted with him said he had a shrewd idea of the identity of the forger. He was indignant, but calm. They walked to a desk outside the door of the Library, and he wrote his name twice over with a broad pen and then with a thin one, and pointed out a number of discrepancies between his genuine signature and that in the *facsimile*. He again asserted that he would certainly discover the forger, and asked : " Do you think, apart from any other consideration, that I would be so great a fool as to write such a letter as that at a time when the Government were seeking by every means to get me into their power?" At one o'clock in the morning he spoke in the House itself. His denial of authorship was definite and indignant, but laboured. The thing was preposterous, he said ; and he added : " It is no exaggeration to say that if I had been in the Park that day I would gladly have stood between Lord Frederick Cavendish and the daggers of the assassins, and for the matter of that, between their daggers and Mr. Burke." The gentlemen of England laughed outright at this denial, and while the sensation was still hot and fresh Lord Salisbury made a disgraceful speech, in which he assumed that the terrible charge had been proved.

It is no exaggeration to say that the whole story was believed generally in England. The eminence of the *Times* in the world of journalism was held to justify a strong presumption of Parnell's guilt. He was advised not to take an action for libel. In the then state of public opinion, a jury was not to be risked. Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell did bring the *Times* before a jury, and Parnell was *subpœnaed*. Counsel for the newspaper disclosed that the *facsimile* of incriminating documents had been growing. A batch received in the early part of 1888 were read out, and then, having secured an excellent re-publication of the abominable charges, the Attorney-General, who spoke for three days, made the amazing announcement : " Cost what it may to the *Times*, they will not expose one of the several persons from whom these documents were obtained." Davitt, as we shall see, discovered that the *Times* had already received an unmistakable indication of the weakness of their grand accusation.

Parnell was keenly stung by this development. A year had elapsed since the *fac-simile*, and now there were more letters in the *dossier*. He went to Morley, and announced his intention of instituting an action, and Morley went over the arguments against it, but Parnell was firm. He had

nothing to fear : they might cross-examine him when and where and how they wished. He agreed, however, to hold his hand for the present, contenting himself with another denial in the House. Three days later he determined to ask for a Select Committee to investigate the charges. Morley tried to dissuade him, but he would not listen. The Government, who were beyond all reasonable doubt in the closest association with the *Times*, replied that the House was incompetent to deal with the affair, and the Irish leader threatened that he would put down a motion for a Committee and demand a day for its discussion.

The Government now showed their hand. They persisted in their refusal of a Committee, but offered a Statutory Commission. Into the story of the establishment of that Special Commission it is not necessary to go. It remains one of the shadiest transactions in British history. The upshot was that the leader of the Irish people and many of his comrades-in-arms were compelled to clear their characters and the character of the entire movement with which they were identified before a tribunal arranged solely by their most vehement political opponents to try a political charge. Almost all the forms of law were discarded. All the precautions which British justice usually takes in the interest of the accused were set aside. There was no specific indictment drawn in refutation of which the defendants might arrange their defence. With cruel and malicious deliberation the Tories had constructed a court to whose inquisition there should be no limits. As Morley put it, "three judges were trying a social and political revolution."

Parnell did not set much store upon these points, which worried and abashed British constitutionalists. The whole thing began and ended for him with the letters. The others might talk about the great scheme of jurisprudence in Britain since the Revolution, and might appeal to the sanctity which surrounded the paraphernalia of criminal law. He had his accustomed hold on the concrete. He adjudged, and rightly, that if he could demolish the case set up by the letters all else was of small moment. His interest centred, therefore, upon the *facsimile* and its pendants.

The Commission formally began its work on September 17, 1888. Every rational being in the community fully expected that the *Times* people would make a start with the letters—the Parnell *facsimile* and the others. But there was a tremendous reason why they should not. These precious documents were probably already suspect in Printing House Square. Instead, they began to compile in evidence a

Unionist history of the Irish agrarian revolution. They had the benefit of the active co-operation of the British Government. The resultant scandal will not be wiped out easily from the annals of a nation which prides itself especially upon its love of fair-play. Had the *Times* succeeded in proving the charges, it would have been the duty of the Government to put Parnell and his friends in the dock. Yet the Attorney-General of the day was allowed to appear for the accusers. The State archives were placed at the disposal of the conductors of the great anti-Irish newspaper. The officials of the Irish Executive were permitted to assist them. They got access to the convict prison in their hunt for evidence. One of the Invincible assassins, now undergoing a life sentence, was brought forward to establish the connection between the Irish members and his gang. A jury had already passed a resolution declaring him unworthy of belief. He now not only swore to the letters produced, but told the circumstances under which they were written. Davitt asserted that this ruffian was offered his liberty on condition of giving evidence to connect Egan, Davitt himself, and others with the Invincible gang. Six years later Davitt found him in a colonial jail charged with stabbing a man. He had begun his career with five years' imprisonment for highway robbery. This was the kind of work in which the chief law officer had involved himself. The monotonous reconstruction of crimes long past went on for fifty days before the *Times* ventured to introduce the only part of the case which was of the slightest interest or importance—the letters. Their story has been told so often that it might be dismissed in a sentence but for the continuity of the narrative.

A fellow named Houston, the son of a prison warder, and who had been a junior reporter on the Dublin *Daily Express*, but was now secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, came into communication in the summer of 1885 with a hoary old villain, another journalist, named Richard Pigott, about a pamphlet entitled "Parnellism Unmasked." Pigott was one of the lowest of his species. He was notorious to boot. He ran a "strong" Nationalist paper in Dublin. We have already told how he was bought out when Parnell established *United Ireland*. Then he wrote begging letters to Forster, and wheedled a substantial sum from him. He recanted his alleged nationalism, and wrote "strong" on the other side. Then he tried to blackmail Mr. Patrick Egan and the League, and was exposed in the public press. Column upon column of the *Freeman's Journal* had been devoted to Pigott in 1881. Forster had found him out, and

advised him to begin a new and better career under strange skies. He was a fit instrument for the dirty work to which he was now attracted. Houston went to him, asked him if possible to get "documentary evidence" for newspaper purposes, and promised him a guinea a day and expenses. To the unfortunate wretch, discredited and penniless, this was a direct and irresistible incentive to crime. It was backed by an undertaking that his name would not be mentioned. Pigott—and it is the only thing to his credit—did not spring at the offer. But the temptation won. For a time he was in clover—had a trip to America, and another to Paris and Lausanne.

The money upon which the extraordinary quest of this unique emissary was sustained was supplied by Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, a Mr. Jonathan Hogg, and Lord Richard Grosvenor, an ex-Liberal Whip, who became Lord Stalbridge. In April, 1886, Mr. Buckle, editor of the *Times*, was approached, but refused to have anything to do with the affair at that stage. Pigott at last hit upon a Fenian in Lausanne, whom he interviewed, and it was to strengthen this interview that the letters were discovered. They were found in Paris. A personage with the convincing name of Murphy had them—six involving Egan and five involving Parnell. When trade broke out, it flourished madly. Murphy let Pigott take copies of these documents, which had probably been left in Paris by Frank Byrne or a man named Kelly, who was supposed to have bought the knives for the Park murders.

Pigott gave Houston the copies—"the *facsimile*" amongst them. He tempted Buckle again, but was again repulsed. Then Pigott went back to Paris, and was followed by young Houston and a Dr. Maguire, professor of moral philosophy in Trinity College, Dublin. The night the paymasters arrived, Pigott came with the precious letters to their hotel, saying "the men" who had given them were below stairs, and wanted cash down. Houston and Maguire consulted together, fell in love with the letters, and clinched the bargain. Maguire advanced £850, which was not bad for a professor of moral philosophy, and Houston gave Pigott £500 for the men below stairs and £105 for himself. That was all. Pigott immediately joined the men below stairs, or at least was supposed to do so, and went off affluent.

Houston hastened to England, managed to see Lord Hartington, and asked his advice as to the use of the letters. There was no advice to be had in that quarter. Back to Buckle again. Buckle referred him to MacDonald, the

manager of the paper. MacDonald said the letters should be submitted to the legal advisers of the firm, but he was considerate enough not to ask any questions, inconvenient or otherwise. He had known Houston slightly; surely that was sufficient. Mr. Soames, the solicitor, was then consulted. Houston told him he was pledged to secrecy, and he asked no questions. The letters were submitted to one of those involuntary necromancers, the experts in handwriting. He said they were genuine. The *Times* then accepted the find. Houston and his friends were at that moment £1,780 out of pocket, and the day the *fac-simile* appeared that sum was paid to Houston. That energetic young man did tell MacDonald, before the articles began to appear, that Pigott was the fortunate finder of the incriminating documents, but London did not dream of enquiring from Dublin who on earth this Richard Pigott was. Davitt asserted he had information that even before the O'Donnell action came into court, Pigott told the *Times* people that he could not, if he were put into the witness-box, sustain the story of the letters. He had, in fact, been trying to get back the letters already handed in, and was complaining of breach of contract, inasmuch as he had distinctly stipulated that his name should not be mentioned.

The most ordinary precautions would have saved the *Times* people, if they had desired to be saved, from the position in which they now found themselves. The moment the copy of the *Times* containing the *facsimile* was opened in the office of the *Freeman's Journal* one of the first persons who saw it exclaimed, "That's Pigott." The moment Mr. Patrick Egan glanced at one of the letters purporting to be his handiwork, he wrote off to his friends: "Dick Pigott is the forger." In the sham letter "hesitancy" was spelt "hesitency," just as Pigott had written it in the letters which Egan held. Parnell alone did not suspect the wretched outcast journalist. So straightly was Pigott pointed at that the first act of Parnell's solicitor when he received instructions to act in the case was to serve a *subpœna* on him. More remarkable still, Archbishop Walsh, three days before the articles began, received a letter from Pigott himself—a strange document, if ever there was one—informing him of certain proceedings "in preparation, with the object of destroying the influence of the Parnellite Party in Parliament." His object in writing the letter need not be sought. He was confronted with the document itself when he entered the witness-box. This was the notorious character who succeeded in playing upon the political rancour of the *Times*,

and hoodwinking it into one of the most infamous proceedings on record.

Pigott was called to the witness-box. His story amazed the world. No one could believe his ears. The monumental indictment had been built up on the strength of Dick Pigott's arrangements with some imaginary gentlemen below stairs in a Paris hotel. If a novelist had incorporated such a scene in his work he would have been chided gently as a very poor hand, by the reviewers of the *Times*. Yet here it was, in desperate earnest, with the *Times* a party to the simple yet colossal fiction. Before Pigott had been many minutes in the witness-box the whole scandalous affair had fallen on the heads of the conspirators of Printinghouse Square. It did not need the cross-examination of Sir Charles Russell to convince everybody that the letters were fabrications. The wretch was worried terribly by the great advocate, so terribly that even those against whom he had plotted and forged felt something like pity for his tortures.

Parnell was present only at the close of the cross-examination. Pigott was to return to the box at the next sitting, but as he stepped down Parnell said to his solicitor: "That man will not come into the box again. If you do not keep your eye on him you will find that he will leave the country." "It is little matter now," said the solicitor. The night following, the wretch called on Mr. Labouchere, made a confession of guilt, and told how he had forged the letters. Four months before this he had been enticed to an interview at Mr. Labouchere's house, where he was brought face to face with Parnell, and charged with the forgery. He admitted his crime, but soon after recalled his confession. It was all over with him now. Sir Charles Russell had unmasked his villainy. There was nothing for it but flight. When the Commission sat again there was no witness. A warrant was issued for his arrest. The detectives followed his tracks to a hotel in Madrid. When the unfortunate fugitive found he had been run to earth, he shot himself.

But the Pigott episode—ghastly, revolting, astounding—was not the only sinister incident in the memorable inquisition. The third witness called—long before the clumsy forger appeared—was Captain O'Shea. It has been asserted that Parnell was for long convinced that this man was the mainspring of the devilry, and it was perhaps because of this agonising suspicion that he used to prowl about by night searching the depths of London for a clue, for so he is said to have done. And now O'Shea appeared to swear against him. He swore that the signatures to the letters produced

were Parnell's, and in cross-examination, that Houston had told him of a rumour that he was connected with Pigott and another gentleman (an ex-member of the Irish Party) in obtaining these letters. He had, to the best of his belief, never seen Pigott. He had dined with Mr. Buckle, editor of the *Times*, and Sir Rowland Blennerhasset, and was a friend of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. He had made certain statements about the Phoenix Park murders on the strength of information from one Mulqueeny, a clerk of a dock company in London, to whom he had often given money for electioneering. "He did not ever remember saying that he would be revenged upon Mr. Parnell, or that he had a shell charged with dynamite to blow him up." "I am not suggesting," said Sir Charles, "that it was actually dynamite." O'Shea added that the memoranda connected with the Kilmainham Treaty were destroyed on the instructions of Mr. Gladstone.

Parnell is described as prompting this cross-examination in a voice hoarse with rage, and we can well believe that the fiercest hatred was burning in the breasts of the two men. It was the first real warning to Parnell of the lengths to which O'Shea was prepared to go in order to ruin him. Thereafter he could expect no mercy at the hands of this foe. The significance of the dread episode was lost on most of those who saw it, but to Parnell it must have spoken "Doom." To the last possible moment the great Irishman clung to his obsession, but the masterly advocate could make nothing of it. Pigott had to bear all the guilt. It may be added that it was to Chamberlain the *Times* people first applied when they were endeavouring to find out whether O'Shea would give evidence for them.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DAVITT ON HIS DEFENCE.

THE real protagonist of the Special Commission on the Nationalist side was, however, Davitt. He moved through the vast drama like Chorus in the Greek plays. He it was who explained the action, linked up its threads, contrived the climax, unravelled the plot, punished the guilty. From the very beginning he threw himself into the affair with boundless energy. No Irish leader had such an intimate

acquaintance with the subterranean workings of Irish agitation. He had a direct knowledge of the American side of the movement. He was the most important and most visible link between the secret and the public organisation. Yet the *Times* did not want to include him in the indictment, and he himself had to fight for a *locus standi* before the Commission.

He had already organised a secret service department to counter the machinations of the *Times* and the Government. He had volunteers—vigilant, knowledgeable, astute—in many places. His agents spread themselves over two continents. He superintended the whole construction of the defence. He discovered everything that shattered the conspiracy. It is to Davitt it was due in the main that Ireland and Parnell won such an annihilating victory. Some doubts seem to have arisen as to the genuineness of Mr. O'Donnell's action earlier in the year, but Davitt at once vouched for the case. He had interested himself in it and given assistance, and he knew that it was well meant. His advice as to procedure appears to have been bad. He was now in the arena himself, and nothing could be better than the way he conducted his defence.

It is both curious and interesting to relate that Pigott was one of the first men in Ireland whom Davitt went to visit after his release from prison in the 'seventies. The young patriot knew of the proprietor of the *Irishman*, and possibly attributed his release, in some measure at any rate, to the fearless and unpurchasable editor of that virile nationalist journal. Seventeen years later it was Davitt who traced the footsteps of the same Pigott through one of the most dastardly plots of the century. That he suspected Pigott early in the development of the unique drama is highly probable, for, indeed, that clumsy conspirator insisted on making people aware of his existence. We have seen how he wrote to Archbishop Walsh even before the Woulfe Flanagan articles began to appear. More whimsical still, eight days after the publication of the *facsimile*, he wrote to the *Daily Chronicle*: "As one of the 'individuals' in Paris just now who 'was formerly connected with a defunct national paper in Ireland,' permit me to say that I know nothing whatever of the alleged Parnell letter, and had neither hand, act, nor part in its publication." As early as May, news reached these countries that Mr. Patrick Egan, then in America, had submitted letters in his possession to the Governor, Auditor and Treasurer of the State of Nebraska, and the Mayor, Postmaster, and bankers of the city of Lincoln, none of them

Irishmen, and that they were astonished at resemblances they presented to the letters published in the *Times*.

The secret service on the side of the Nationalists proved highly efficient. Some of the most ingenious strokes of the enemy were discovered in time and counteracted. Wherever the agents of Printinghouse Square burrowed and mined, the Nationalist agents followed suit, with the result that in one instance only was Davitt caught napping. When it became evident that the *Times* was botching the affair, one of the most remarkable spies of modern times came forward to help them. Sir Robert Anderson, the head of the Secret Service Agency of the Government, says Le Caron, or Beach, was under the impression that "the prosecution" was a Government matter. Although Sir Robert could not accept that view, he supplied to Le Caron the official or semi-official papers which he had furnished during his career as spy.

Beach was the son of a rate-collector at Colchester. He went to America, took the name of Le Caron, fought in the Civil War, rose to be major, and joined the Fenian organisation. He arranged the Fenian raid into Canada, and informed the British authorities what to expect. He had secret cypher circulars to produce, and gave an account of an interview with Parnell in the Lobby of the House of Commons, an account which was flatly contradicted by the Irish leader. It appears that he was promised £10,000 for his evidence. He was overreached in a simple and amusing way. Davitt had been cross-examining witnesses all along. He took notes of Le Caron's evidence, as if preparing to cross-examine him also. Le Caron held something back to spring upon him. But Davitt never asked him a question. Davitt was for one night Le Caron's guest, being attended by him in an illness whilst in America. This remarkable spy, according to Davitt, was never once suspected during his twenty years' intercourse with American revolutionaries, and all that time he was writing once a week to the Secret Service Department in London or Dublin. As Davitt did not cross-examine him, the spy could not supplement his direct evidence, and thus episodes of Davitt's first and second visit to the United States, which Le Caron had kept up his sleeve so that the dramatic effect might be heightened, were never disclosed. Davitt himself when he came to give evidence gave an account of his visits to the camps of the Clan-na-Gael. His cross-examination by Webster, the Attorney-General, was searching, and not too fair. The facts connected with his conviction for treason were again raked up, and the unfortunate letter, which was the most damaging detail on that occasion,

he was now called upon to explain, and he did so. It was the first time he had told the story in public. But he had no proof of his statements, and one of the most affecting moments in the historic trial was when he appealed from the witness-box to the only person who could corroborate him to confirm his story. That man was then safe in America, but the appeal went unheeded.

With Pigott's collapse the *raison d'être* of the Commission ceased. Parnell never attached any serious import to the other branches of the inquiry. He presented himself for examination, and made a slip which proved, in fact, to be no mistake at all. He created an excellent impression. He conceived that his interest in the proceedings was then at an end. An application was made for the production of the books of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, just as the books of the Land League had been presented for inspection. It was a fair demand, and Davitt seems to have been under the impression that had it been granted, some members of Lord Salisbury's Government would have been linked up with the conspiracy. However that may be, the judges would not compel the Unionists to open their archives, and Parnell withdrew from the case. He wanted Davitt to accompany him, but the Father of the Land League was bent on clearing the character of his child, and he held on to the end, and delivered that comprehensive and conspicuously able speech, during six successive days, which he embodied afterwards in "The Defence of the Land League." The ground and matter were by no means new, but the presentation of the case was vivid and effective, and the speech contains passages of passionate eloquence and powerful appeal. Nor did the fervid orator lose this opportunity of impressing the democracy of Great Britain, in whose sense of justice he had a profound and lasting faith.

The result of the trial was a triumph for the Irish cause and its leaders. A wave of sympathy with both began to flow over England. The Home Rule cause had with difficulty been making headway, but now Gladstone's famous tide set in, and a vast enthusiasm arose at the sound of the old man's voice and pleadings. Government majorities fell in the House and in the country. By-elections filled the hearts of the Irish with the highest hopes. Coercion was still plied vigorously by Mr. Balfour in Ireland, but an ever-growing number of the English were disgusted with the policy. Parnell was the hero of the hour. There could be no doubt that the policy for which he stood was on the very verge of victory. I have said that Parnell's work for Ireland

ended virtually with his great speech on the first Home Rule Bill. Davitt, as a great historical character, ends with the speech at the Special Commission. He had still eighteen years to live, and he lived them actively and usefully, but his career from 1867 to 1888 is an episode of high historical importance and perfect dramatic unity; the remainder of his life was too versatile to leave enduring effects. Amongst his enterprises was the founding of a daily newspaper, *The Labour World*, which he designed as the mouthpiece of the progressive labour movement, to advocate more democratic organisation of the workers of Great Britain and Ireland, the extension of State and municipal control and ownership, and naturally, that the "annual increment" swallowed up by landlords should be diverted to the general good of the community. The paper was published in London, and only lived eight months. Davitt was not a journalist; few men in the world are; and in any case his acute friend, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, assures us that he could not have made the paper a pecuniary success if he had had "the managerial capacity of a Villemessant in addition to the vigour and originality of a Cobbett." A more effective and successful piece of work was his intervention and arbitration in the great Liverpool Dock Strike. But he seemed destined to be dragged into conflict. The even tenour of his peaceful inclinations was once again interrupted by an Irish tragedy.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHAOS.

It is now sufficiently long since 1890 to have that fatal year treated dispassionately. The disasters of that time are not very likely to recur, but they are full of interesting and instructive lessons. The facts, too, are few, and not complex. A great tragedy is never cumbersome or involved. The elemental passions are its origin. The common and inevitable fate of man is its climax.

On November 22, 1889, the Special Commission sat for the last time. On May 7 Parnell's cross-examination had finished, and he was from that instant one of the heroes of the day. He was elected an honorary member of the National Liberal Club, and he received the freedom of the ancient City of Edinboro'; he was entertained at a banquet by the Eighty Club, and at its table had an historic hand-

shake with Earl Spencer; he was the object of a wonderful demonstration in St. James's Hall, in London, and he was almost mobbed by admirers at the Women's Liberal Association *soiree* in the Grosvenor Gallery; he was received by the British House of Commons as if he were already a Premier, the whole Liberal Party, led by the illustrious Gladstone himself, rising in their places to greet him fresh from the victory over his powerful enemies.

Gladstone had been for some time mooting the idea of inviting Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, Mr. McCarthy and Parnell to Hawarden. Even as late as December 2, 1889—according to Mr. McCarthy—it had not come to anything: "I don't think Parnell has yet quite seen his way." He made up his mind quickly enough in the end, for, having attended a great Liberal meeting at Nottingham, he arrived at Gladstone's seat in the evening of December 18. They spoke that night and next day on the Home Rule question. The conversation subsequently assumed an enormous importance. Here are Gladstone's notes upon it: "Reviewed and threw into form all the points of possible amendment or change in the plan of Irish government, &c., for my meeting with Mr. Parnell. He arrived at 5.30, and we had two hours of satisfactory conversation; but he put off the *gros* of it. 19.—Two hours more with Mr. P. on points in Irish government plans. He is certainly one of the very best people to deal with that I have ever known. Took him to the old Castle. He seems to notice and appreciate everything." It will be necessary to return to these four pregnant hours.

Five days later—on Christmas Eve—Captain O'Shea filed a petition for divorce, naming Parnell co-respondent. An acrimonious controversy in the newspaper had taken place between the pair a year before, and Parnell wrote of O'Shea as Chamberlain's "go-between." "It is known," said a telegram sent out by one of the news-agencies, "that the relations between Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Parnell have for some time been strained." Now that the blow had fallen, even so well informed a man as Mr. Justin McCarthy "was struck with positive consternation."

And yet it is scarcely possible that he was surprised. A *liaison* could scarcely have been more publicly maintained than was it, if any vestige of secrecy were to be preserved. As long ago as 1882 the Irish Party had got wind of the word. Parnell was absent from Parliament at a time of much anxiety for the party. He could not be traced. They heard he had gone to Paris. He was sought there. At his hotel no tidings were to be had, but letters awaited him. Whether

justifiably or not it is unnecessary to inquire—some of the missives were opened. “One of the letters,” says Mr. T. P. O’Connor, “was from a lady. It was scarcely glanced at; but it told enough: it was the first warning the Irish Party had of the opening of the tragedy that finally engulfed Parnell and went near to engulfing Ireland.” But there were also the election at Liverpool and the scandal at Galway, and it cannot cease to be a cause of wonderment that in spite of all these warnings the crisis evidently found the party unprepared. It is no excuse to say that they were not concerned with the private life of the leader. They knew that at almost any moment the secret might become a public affair, and that it would then demand a public policy in its regard. Nor was it an adequate excuse that they had no evidence of actual guilt. They were men of the world. Without any forced conclusions, without any unreasonable assumptions, they knew there was *primâ facie* a case. When O’Shea entered the witness-box at the Special Commission they must have been painfully certain that he was just the man to hurl the other blow at the most crucial and awkward moment if he held sufficient evidence against Parnell. Surely it was not absurd to expect that they would have thought out the possibilities and probabilities of such a terrible situation, and have been ready when the dread emergency arose. Indeed, under the circumstances, it could not be considered an emergency at all, because it was fully anticipated, and the certain consequences were as patent as the noon-day sun. No excuse of affection for the chief, of awe before the leader, of admiration for the statesman can serve. A national cause was in their keeping, and its safety—the paramount consideration of their lives—should have swept admiration, fear, affection away. Their salvation and the fortunes of their country depended, in this instance, not upon statecraft or the exercise of great talents, but upon their common-sense. With all their gifts, and amongst them were many of the most gifted of their race, their common-sense failed them in this comparatively simple problem. On the other hand, it must be remembered that they were the men of all others who knew and felt what the chief was, and their very powerlessness in the crisis is one of the most striking proofs of the dominance he exercised, whether they liked it or not, over the words and acts and even over the thoughts of men. Parnell throughout his life was a species of hypnotism.

As to the way in which he himself approached the climax, the first evidence I have been able to find is in a letter from Mr. Justin McCarthy to Mrs. Campbell Praed, on January 9,

1890 : " I have not seen Parnell since—but I have heard that he proposes to lead the party just the same until the trial comes on—which is surely the right course to take, as he does not admit that there is any ground for the action." Mr. Justin McCarthy had revealed his own mind a week previously : " It will have a terrible effect on public opinion in Ireland. I suppose, while it is happening, Parnell cannot well take part in public life—and how are we to get on without him? I am not equal to the leadership in health or means or leisure or spirits ; and yet if I refuse, the papers will say that I am getting sick of the whole thing. I feel frightfully upset by the affair." From the same pen to the same correspondent we have an illuminating note on the meeting of the Irish Party in Dublin, on October 8, the same year. Before he started for Ireland, he received a letter from Parnell : " For some reason, which he says he will explain to me privately, but which he does not explain now, he cannot attend the meeting in Dublin, and he asks me to preside in his absence and to see that his views—which, as he knows, are my views too—are carried out." Mr. McCarthy felt, and properly, that this was trying to his loyalty, and then followed this description :—" The meeting went off very well, so far as our men and our public were concerned. They are all singularly loyal and trusting. They asked no questions ; assumed that it was all right—all carefully considered—all for the best. I know nothing as yet—it may be ill-health kept concealed—it may be some understanding with Hawarden—I do not know, but I am sure there must be some good reason." That is to say, for Parnell's absence from such a meeting at such a time. It is evident that, as far as Parnell was concerned, there was to be no confidence at that moment between his colleagues and him. They asked no questions. It was sheer fatuity. It is truly time enough to bid the devil good-morrow when you meet him, but if you are well aware that he is waiting round the bend of the road, which you have got to turn, although about the tone of the greeting is well worth the trouble.

There is abundant evidence to determine the view entertained by Gladstone and the Liberals. The by-elections were going well. There was no doubt that the Home Rule cause was gaining the ascendancy. An election at Eccles, in Lancashire, was fought admittedly on the Irish issue. A trenchant Home Rule victory was the result. Parnell spoke in the House on the forged letter in February. His speech was altogether excellent. Things were going on as usual to all outward appearance, but the Liberal leader, in the early

part of November, wrote to the Whip: "I fear a thunder-cloud is about to burst over Parnell's head, and I suppose it will end the career of a man in many respects invaluable." But a fortnight later Mr. Morley, who had conversed with Parnell at Brighton, told him there were grounds for an impression that the Irish leader would emerge scathless from this new charge. A distinguished Liberal said to Mr. Barry O'Brien in the autumn, "I do not really see what affair it is of the Liberal Party."

We have seen that Parnell appears to have raised hopes or doubts in Mr. McCarthy's mind. There is, however, some reason to believe that the hopes were purely inferential; that they were derived from explanations, excuses, palliations, simply because Parnell's followers desired desperately to expect the best. Parnell seems to have taken a strange, narrow, non-moral view of the affair, and it is not improbable that this view was wholly misunderstood until it was too late. Mr. T. P. O'Connor is very fair upon this aspect of the tragedy. Parnell may have said that he would come out of the trial with his character untarnished, but it is not certain that he ever denied the fact of misconduct. It is true that Davitt, who had the foresight and manliness to question him about the position, believed that Parnell gave him an assurance that there was no foundation for the charge, though how so well-informed a man could possibly have accepted such a comprehensive denial it is hard to conceive. Yet that "he was going to get out of this without the slightest stain on his name or reputation," unequivocal as it sounds, may have been honestly intended to mean something very different from what Davitt assumed. The fact, however, is that Davitt, on the strength of it, spread the good news to the best of his ability.

It goes without saying that a severe analysis of Parnell's action throughout the episode must be distasteful to some, for there are those whose heroes are necessarily faultless. Yet it must be remembered that he was a politician with a very uncommon mastery of the arts and crafts of the trade. He has been described as a man of his word. Every important statesman who had dealings with him has left on record that his word was sterling, a sufficient guarantee of good faith. So that one is forced to the conclusion that Parnell took a warped view of the moral delinquency. Only a saint or a hypocrite will ever pronounce upon this subject without extreme diffidence. In a world where the best are only less errant than their neighbours, the censor's is, indeed, an invidious task. There is a sentence in Gladstone which

is as well worth quoting as anything he ever said : " Never let it be forgotten that there is scarcely a single moral action of a single man of which other men can have such a knowledge, in its ultimate grounds, its surrounding incidents, and the real determining causes of its merits, as to warrant their pronouncing a conclusive judgment upon it." Everybody can apply that dictum. The moral guilt of Parnell can only be dealt with by cleaner hands than mine. He himself, beyond all question, had fixed a degree to his culpability. It was an unconventional view. But the degree of guilt did not matter a pin's head in this case. He had outraged that institution which is at the very root of Christian civilisation. Was it to be seriously argued that the debauching of a neighbour's wife, the shaming of another man's children, the habitual violation of the marriage bond, admitted and published to all the world, left the statesman in the same position as before his guilt was known and proved, just because he was a statesman? It is true his genius was not affected, or his pliant and resourceful statesmanship, or his political acumen and facility. But was he not a shocking bad example, and all the more so because resting upon the votes and goodwill of the masses? It may appear useless to argue the question now, for indeed the Parnell case decided the controversy, if there was ever any serious question about it. Yet the cloud of sophistry which was massed around it makes it impossible to pass on without a comment. Tawdry epigrams about swopping horses in mid-stream and delusive parallels from the muck-heaps of history were quoted to prove that known immorality made no difference in a political leader. People were asked what would they think of sailors who would refuse to fight under Nelson. There was the well-known cynicism about the eleventh commandment. There was nearly everything except an honest appreciation of the fact that to licence or to ignore such immorality is only possible in a nation which has never heard or hearkened to the thunders of Sinai.

But there is another consideration which one feels easier in handling. Whatever be the proper view of the moral question it is undeniable that a very great number of people regarded it as of the greatest importance, and these people had votes. The moral aspect of the case was certain to influence a substantial number of electors in a great Catholic country like Ireland. The pronouncement of the hierarchy is sufficient proof that the continuance of Parnell's leadership meant a fracture of nationalist unity. Then there were the Nonconformists of England. It is the last stage of historical

ignorance to call these men hypocrites, but whatever they were, they were certain to make the moral issue paramount, and without their votes no Liberal Government pledged to Home Rule was possible. Fret as we may at the reflection that their hostility in the circumstances meant the sacrifice of a cause which they held to be just and urgent, and for a reason that of itself had really nothing to do with that just and urgent cause at all, we know that feeling and emotions and sentiments, by which political issues are so often decided, are nourished on food far different from the nutriment of logic. These were hard facts, and they constituted well-nigh insurmountable grounds for the retirement of Parnell.

The trial began on November 15: no defence was entered; the case lasted two days. The story told lacked scarcely anything calculated to make the culprits contemptible and ridiculous. Deceit, lying, subterfuge, meanness, squalid adventures, and, worse perhaps than all, disgraceful intrigue under the very eyes of the children of the unhappy woman were revealed in the evidence. It was the sorriest of sorry spectacles, and, as far as the record went, without a single redeeming feature. A decree *nisi* was granted on Monday, November 17. On November 18, at a meeting of the chief branch of the National League in Dublin, a resolution upholding Parnell's leadership was passed amid enthusiasm. Eight members of Parliament were present. That day the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*, who was in touch with the chief, announced on "direct authority" that he had not even the remotest intention of retiring either temporarily or permanently. On November 20, a meeting in the Leinster Hall, Dublin, originally called in support of the evicted tenants was suddenly turned into a demonstration of fidelity to Parnell, and was one of the most remarkable incidents in the passionate drama. A host of the Parliamentarians was present, speeches that lacked nothing of fire and eloquence were delivered, a cablegram was read from the American Mission, Messrs O'Brien, Dillon, T. P. O'Connor, and T. Harrington, in unison with the meeting, and again the leadership of Parnell was pronounced desirable, essential, indispensable. It was abundantly evident that the colleagues of the leader, for the most part at any rate, were prepared to condone, or already condoned, the moral fault, and saw no serious danger on the political horizon. There is reason to believe that Parnell himself was not only not pleased but was positively angry when he heard of the proceedings in the Leinster Hall. The meeting of the party to elect their sessional chairman, the technical title of the Irish leader, was fixed for Tuesday, November 25.

Gladstone was naturally anxious from the first. Much criticism has been passed upon his proceedings, but the candid historian must hold that in a position of almost intolerable delicacy he acted with prudence and a kindly consideration. It is fair to remember at the start that Parnell himself had set an execrable precedent, pardonable only from the unparalleled circumstances of the case, when he virtually placed his resignation at Gladstone's disposal after the Phoenix Park murders. On the 18th the Liberal leader wrote to Morley: "But I think it plain that we have nothing to say and nothing to do in the matter." On November 20, the National Liberal Federation met at Sheffield. Morley and Sir William Harcourt were present. Gladstone supplied Morley before he went north with notes on the position—the Irish had a right to decide the question; Parnell's enormous services placed them in a position of immense difficulty; the Liberal Party, and especially its leaders, must be passive, watch, and wait. But evidence came swift and frequent to Hawarden that the Liberal rank and file would not be passive. Gladstone resented certain acute criticism to which his own passivity was subjected—"as if it could be the duty of any party leader to take into his hands the intolerable burden of exercising the rigours of inquisition and private censorship over every man with whom what he judged might be the highest possible expediency might draw him to co-operate."

On November 23, the Liberal leader had been fully informed as to the state of feeling in his battalions. He conceived "that the time for action has now come." On the 24th he arrived in London. Parliament would meet on the 25th. The members of the Cabinet of 1886 and the Chief Whip met their leader. The issue they discussed has been clearly stated on unimpeachable authority—it was not a question of interfering with the choice of the Irish Party, or of inflicting political ostracism on a moral delinquency, but whether the present continuance of Parnell's leadership, "with the silent assent of the British leaders, did not involve decisive abstention at the polls on the day when Irish policy could once more be submitted to the electors of Great Britain." It must not be forgotten that Gladstone throughout never left political ground for a single moment. The voter was the person he kept steadfastly in mind.

As a result of the consultation, Gladstone sent for Mr. Justin McCarthy, and, while paying tribute to the splendid and unrivalled services of Parnell, told him that his retention of the leadership would mean the loss of the next elections

and the putting off of Home Rule until a time when he (Gladstone) would no longer be able to bear a hand in the struggle. He said he would not write this to Parnell himself, because it might seem harsh and dictatorial, and might hurt Irish feeling, but he authorised Mr. McCarthy to convey his wishes to Parnell when he saw him. "It was a momentous interview," wrote Mr. McCarthy to a friend. He wrote at once to Parnell, asking him to decide nothing as to himself until he saw him in the House. This letter was sent to the House "on the off-chance" of finding the leader there.

Meanwhile, Gladstone addressed a letter to Morley incorporating his conversation with Mr. McCarthy, and including the famous sentence to the effect that the continuance of Parnell's leadership "would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party, based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity." Apparently sensible people said, in that stupid way that sensible people talk so often, that this did not say that Gladstone would retire: of course it did not, but it said that for all practical purposes it would be just as well if he did. Gladstone emphasised the fact that his chat with Mr. McCarthy was confidential, "and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action; but," he added, "I also begged that he would make known to the Irish Party, at their meeting to-morrow afternoon, that such was my conclusion, if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated." In case Mr. McCarthy should fail to establish communication with Parnell, he now asked Morley to convey "the conclusion itself" to him should an opening present itself.

Everything in connection with this tragic affair was a fatality in itself. This chat with Mr. McCarthy and the Gladstone letter produced a misunderstanding which many still suppose to have had the most unfortunate and decisive consequences. Gladstone distinctly states that he begged Mr. McCarthy to make known his view at the meeting of the party in the event of Parnell showing no sign of retirement. Mr. McCarthy states: "Gladstone said that the Liberals might lose the General Election if Parnell remained leader of the Irish Party. He did not show me any letter. He did not at our meeting ask me to convey anything to Parnell, and besides, I should not have done it at his bidding. It was a matter for us to settle without the interference of Mr. Glad-

stone or any other Englishman." Every effort to find the chief failed. It was as if he had possessed himself of the ring of Gyges. There is reason to believe that he avoided access deliberately, and failure to find him was taken by Morley to imply that he meant "to fight it out." He positively declares, however, that Mr. McCarthy at the last moment was able to deliver Gladstone's message, and that Parnell replied that he should stand to his guns.

But Mr. McCarthy besides the statement already quoted made another, and it further confuses the narrative. "Later, talking over the situation," writes Mrs. Campbell Praed, "I asked Mr. McCarthy why he had not told Parnell the substance of Mr. Gladstone's letter to Mr. John Morley, and he replied: 'Because I did not know of it. I was under the impression when I left Mr. Gladstone that, though he disapproved of Parnell, he would still fight for our cause. By some extraordinary misapprehension, Morley did not tell me of the letter, though he had it in his pocket when we met before the Nationalist meeting. I can only conclude that he thought I knew of it, when he asked me, 'I suppose you are quite aware of Mr. Gladstone's views?' and I answered, 'Oh, yes,' thinking he referred to my conversation with Mr. Gladstone.'" Will it be believed that Morley actually states that he did not reach the House of Commons on the 25th until after the meeting of the Irish Party? Such are the annoyances of the historian. Every important witness in this momentous transaction differs on the most vital points. The truth seems to be that Parnell did not know of Gladstone's views until the party meeting had ended. Morley's comment is, therefore, unjust and at the same time invaluable: "The gravity of the unfortunate error committed in the failure to communicate the private message to the whole of the Nationalist members, with or without Mr. Parnell's leave, lay in the fact that it magnified and distorted Mr. Gladstone's later intervention into a humiliating public ultimatum." It is true that this may have had decisive effects on many an Irish Nationalist, but it is more than doubtful if it made the slightest difference with the Irish chief himself.

The party met. There were at least fifty-eight members present; some more arrived late. Parnell was, for a wonder, up to time. The Chief Whip presided. Mr. Sexton, at Mr. McCarthy's request, proposed the re-election of the leader. This was seconded. Only one voice was raised in remonstrance. Mr. Jordon, a plain, blunt, Protestant Ulsterman, rose and said, now that the party had conferred the honour of re-electing him unanimously to the leadership, thereby

paying him the greatest compliment in their power, would it not be well for him, in view of events which had recently become public, to consider his position, and to retire gracefully, so as to ease the situation, which it could not be disguised, was one of a grievous character, and of great peril to the Irish cause. Someone appears to have said: "Cannot you wait till you hear what Mr. Parnell will say?" A silence fell in the chill, gloomy committee room, the motion was put, and at once adopted without dissent.

Parnell immediately took the chair and rose to speak. The report of the speech has been handed down by one of his opponents, and if the report be even tolerably accurate it was an astonishing utterance. After a few commonplace remarks, he touched upon the topic which everybody ruminated and scarcely anybody dared mention. He would, he said, lift aside a corner of the curtain. In a short period of time, when he was free to do so, he would be able to put a different complexion on the case, and would be able to hold his head higher than ever. He denied that he had broken up a happy home, and shattered domestic bliss and felicity. He denied that O'Shea was ever his friend. He had never partaken of his hospitality. Of the two principal witnesses, one was a drunkard and the other a thief. He asked them to keep their lips sealed, as his were, for the time being. They would find that their trust in him had not been misplaced. He had rather appear to be dishonourable than be so.

Morley saw him immediately the meeting finished, and brought him to Mr. Gladstone's room. As they were going along Parnell, in a casual way, announced that he had been again elected chairman. Morley said he was sorry the election was over, for he had a communication to make to him which, as he hoped, might still make a difference. He then read Gladstone's letter. Parnell made a remark about a storm in a teacup. A short and rather acrid conversation ensued. It was evident that the Irishman was not to be moved. "Of course," he observed, as he left the room, "Mr. Gladstone will have to attack me. I shall expect that. He will have a right to do that."

When Gladstone heard of the re-election and of Parnell's determination he was dumbfounded. "Then he burst out," writes Morley, "that we must at once publish his letter to me; at once, that very afternoon." Nothing would do him but a special edition of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. But he was restrained, went into the House, and discussed the topic with Harcourt and Morley. They decided to publish, and to tell Parnell of the decision. The Chief was sitting in his

usual place, as if everything was going on to his liking. Morley went into the Lobby, and had Parnell called out. "Yes," he said, when told of the decision of the Liberal leaders, "I think Mr. Gladstone will be quite right to do that; it will put him straight with his party."

News of the letter spread like wildfire. All Parliamentary business was practically suspended. The Irish members were sent into a panic. Parnell himself told Mr. Sexton what was going to happen. "I hear that Gladstone is about to issue a Manifesto," he said quietly. Mr. Sexton was startled. Of what nature? Oh, Gladstone merely wanted to save his own position, is said to have been the explanation offered. But Parnell was the only man in the House who kept his composure. Efforts were made to hold back the letter. Too late. It was already on the wires. Perhaps at that moment it was being shouted along the Strand, and possibly as far off as Dublin. Even before the new development, some of the Irish Party were uneasy, and seeking to have another meeting for further consideration of the leadership. A few of them had doubtless expected that after re-election the chief would voluntarily retire, for a time at least. When the letter became known, one of them approached Parnell: "I will be very frank with you," he was told, "I will not call the party together. I will not discuss this matter with any person whatsoever, and I will not reconsider my position." Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Sexton had as little success. "We then learned from Mr. McCarthy for the first time," writes one of the party, "of Mr. Gladstone's communication to himself and Mr. Parnell prior to the meeting." That is the doubtful point with which I have already dealt.

And now chaos had come again. The party became as impetuous for revision as they had been for re-election. They became distracted, and perhaps small wonder. They rushed forward a requisition, got thirty-one signatures, and informed Parnell's secretary, requesting him to tell the chief, and, if possible, ensure his presence at the meeting next day. Parnell appeared at the House shortly before the time fixed. Mr. Arthur O'Connor gave him a copy of the requisition. "I decline to attend this meeting," said Parnell. "Very well," said O'Connor; "I will convey your message to the party, but I may tell you, Mr. Parnell, that with you or without you, the meeting will go on." Before O'Connor reached the scene, Parnell had already anticipated him. He seated himself in the chair. The historic struggle in Committee Room 15 had already begun.

CHAPTER XLIX.

DEPOSING A DICTATOR.

THIS was November 26. For eleven exciting days the chief maintained the fight. Five of them were filled with keen and close debate by some of the ablest debaters of the time. The other days were occupied in manœuvres and negotiations that were even more stirring than the swells and currents and whirlpools of controversy. Parnell held his ground from first to last, and finally forced the majority to secede, leaving him in the chair, and entitled, technically at all events, to say that he had driven off the revolters, and had won the first grand operations in the campaign. Committee Room 15, except for its necessity, reflects no discredit on Ireland or her Parliamentary Party. Even as a high, impressive, and necessary discussion, it was a brilliant performance; it was even more remarkable as an example of self-restraint under most difficult circumstances. Of Parnell's management and mastery, it was an irresistible demonstration. He outplayed all his opponents at every point of the game. In strategy and tactics, he beat them every time, every day, on every motion. Only once for a brief minute did his marvellous composure desert him. A coarse, foul taunt, not so much at him as at the unfortunate partner of his folly, and which, alas! set the key for much of the subsequent turmoil, stung him to the quick, and he lost his temper. Yet his retort, bitter and raucous, was not inappropriate to the provocation.

Committee Room 15 was, however, from first to last a gross and somewhat stupid misunderstanding. The party had summoned themselves together to depose the man who was a condition precedent of them. Parnell had made possible even the creation of the party. He did not derive his leadership from them. He was leader of the Irish people before he was chairman of the Irish Party. No one will ever know the secret processes of that fine brain as it conceived, designed, and contrived the Irish Party. It certainly was not a work of motions and amendments, of ayes and noes. He was not a chairman except as a concession to matters of form. He was dictator, absolute, complete, accepted, acknowledged. Think of his servants voting out the dictator! Why, in another age and under other circumstances, he would have shot them down, and he would have been

right, because they were in essence and in fact mutineers. His dictatorship was no fiction. He did actually just what he liked. They complained about his silence over the Hawarden interview. It was nothing to complain about. It was his desire as it was his practice. He had never consulted them over the Kilmainham Treaty or about the first Home Rule Bill which he had formally accepted—and it was his right and title to do so—on behalf of the Irish people. He had ceased, of his own notion, to call together the committee of the party. His action was never questioned. Who would have dared to do so? That was the fallacy of Committee Room 15, and the justification of much of his high-handedness. He was not the equal or the servant of these men, but their master; he derived neither power nor position from them. He had to tolerate their controversy because he was the dictator not of a free nation, but of a nation still in political slavery. It was well for them that it was so. Otherwise, they would have been treated as Napoleon would have treated a marshal who railed against his *amours*. Had the shades of Butt and Shaw been permitted to revisit their Parliamentary haunts that cold, damp November, how they would have smiled and pitied the intelligence of men who wasted hour after hour telling Parnell that they were going to terminate his leadership by a vote of forty-four to twenty-nine—a leadership made of passions, emotions, aspirations, which thrilled millions upon millions of men, and appealed to the deepest sentiments of a nation's soul. It has been said that if this thing or that had happened the situation would have been saved, for either the party would not have re-elected him or he would have voluntarily retired: had Gladstone's opinion been known in time for one thing, or had his letter not been published for another. Speculations of the kind are no help to history. In all probability nothing would have made any difference. Parnell was Ireland's Cæsar, and it was a case of *aut Cæsar aut nullus*. That is the answer to such hypotheses. One master of epigram at least had penetrated Parnell's character and the personal texture of his leadership. "You find," said Mr. Thomas Sexton, "on top a little dust, that you can brush hither or thither—just as you please: and then you come on granite." "Believe me," said the same man seven years before the great struggle, "he will fight with the claws of a tiger if he is ever seriously attacked."

There was one other plea made for those followers who supported and then attacked his leadership. Mr. Sexton stated the plea far better than any other possibly could.

"We believed that the most important question at issue," on the day of the re-election that is to say, "was the question of the unity of the party, and that the best way to consider the unity of the party was to keep Mr. Parnell in the chair." He was very nearly correct, but he ought to have said, "the only way." This was, indeed, the essence of the matter. Irish nationalist unity, of which the unity of the party was a vital component part, was an essential condition of the success of the Home Rule cause. Men like Mr. Sexton saw that clearly enough. What many Parliamentarians and people did not see was that Parnell was that unity. The Irish people did not take kindly to unity. Of the jarring elements he brought under his discipline, not all of them loved him or liked his rule. He was the magician with the potent wand—the fountain and origin of Irish nationalist unity. Without him no real effective unity was at all possible, and some of them knew it quite well. For unity was not a mere question of numbers, as some folk imagined. It was no mathematical proposition. It was also a matter of inspiration, of control, of command, of instinct, of personal attraction. Why not put it shortly—it was a matter of genius; as far as Ireland's cause was concerned, it belonged exclusively to Parnell in his day and generation. It is not a matter of argument, it is a fact, an experience. In the circumstances of the time, the Irish cause rose or sank with Parnell. There was no help for it. His private folly broke the spell. He could no longer impose unity upon his race. The essential illusion was dispelled. He had shown himself too human for his wizardry. The flaw was inherent, not a thing of elections or of party confidence. He was, in a word, to pay the penalty of his sin. As Victor Hugo found the dread word Fate cut into the stone of the belfry, so one might have read Nemesis over the door of Committee Room 15 that dark November day. And the sins of the father afflict the children. He was the embodiment of the Irish cause. No one, Gladstone or any other, could take his place, so the Irish cause was bound to suffer for his sin. Nemesis had both in her inexorable toils. This is Parnell's offence against patriotism. The ruin, as it turned out, was inevitable, unpreventable. But Parnell shirked penance for his country. There was but slight hope at best: the only glimmer came from the possibility of Parnell rising superior to his sad fortune. The evils of his fall were bound to be apparent before long. A Parnell purged of his guilt might have been able to cure these ills. But, then, Elba seldom agrees with such men. As it was, the cause was lost until a generation had passed away,

and to die was the only further service Parnell could do for Ireland.

The intellectual wrangle in Committee Room 15—indeed the whole story of these eleven days—can be curtly dismissed. The meeting on November 26 was adjourned until December 1, to give the chief an opportunity of reconsidering his position. His adherents pressed for the adjournment because it was apparent they were in a minority. Meanwhile Parnell prepared and issued the famous Manifesto, which made him impossible as far as the Liberal Party were concerned. It was a powerful document, without rhetorical appeal, if we except the concluding frothy paragraphs, which alone were not the work of his own hand. Its weak point was that it depended on a statement of facts for which his word, and his alone, was the sole voucher. He gave a version of the Hawarden interview and of a chat with Morley, both of which was promptly and authoritatively denied. He alleged that the next Home Rule Bill would not confer certain vital powers upon the Irish Parliament, and that, nevertheless, the Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament was to be cut down from 103 to 32. He also alleged that Morley had suggested that he should become Chief Secretary and another Irish member a law officer in the next Liberal Government. It is not necessary to consider the assertions and denials. The suspicions of politicians, like those of other men, often colour and shape their recollections of conversation, but the fact is that when the next Home Rule Bill was in preparation, the then Irish Party had considerable difficulty in getting a Bill of which they could approve. But the sting in the Manifesto was its allegation that the independence and integrity of the Irish Party had been sapped by Liberal wire-pullers, and its appeal that his price should be got before he was thrown to "the English wolves." Mr. McCarthy remonstrated, but Parnell insisted that the wolves should go in. Mr. McCarthy then dissented from the whole document. There can be little doubt that the publication of the Manifesto was a grave tactical mistake, but so also was the publication of the Gladstone ultimatum.

On Monday, December 1, the battle raged round a proposal to meet in Dublin, and there settle the question. For more than eleven hours the combat was sustained. It was renewed the following morning, and again went on until Parnell, with grotesque nonchalance, whispered to Mr. Sexton, "I say, Sexton, are you fellows going to keep this thing up all night?" Then the talking ceased. An interval of ten minutes was allowed to summon absentees to the division.

The room was large, and lighted only with reading lamps and candles. The chief's features were scarcely visible through the gloom as he rose to put the question. In his hand he held a list of the party. His voice was firm and his hand steady. Amid intense and quivering excitement he alone was calm. Shout was answered with counter-cry. "Well," he said quietly, "I will call out the names alphabetically, and each gentleman will answer 'Aye' or 'No' as his name is called." The process was painful, but quick. "I find that the 'Nos' are 44 and the 'Ayes' 29, so I declare that the 'Nos' have a majority of 15," he said. Not a single note of triumph or chagrin greeted the fateful words. He had lost the first engagement. He prolonged the struggle with matchless adroitness and plausibility until Saturday, entangling his antagonists time after time in absurd enterprises until he had hopelessly confused the main question with the character of the next Home Rule Bill. He induced deputations to seek from Gladstone and others assurances which he knew well could not be given or obtained, and he prejudiced them thereby with many of their countrymen. At last patience was exhausted. At half-past five in the evening of Saturday, December 6, Mr. Justin McCarthy announced that his colleagues and himself would withdraw. Some comrades, taking different paths, shook hands, and the majority left Committee Room 15 in silence. A mocking laugh and a few jeers followed them. That was all. The chief was left in possession of a handful of adherents. The great party he had fashioned, the finest weapon Ireland had ever possessed, was broken into bits. That morning, when he was told the fight must end before night, he parted from his great lieutenants, Sexton and Healy, saying, "Let us shake hands, if it is to be the last time." They did so. A fiercer and more ruinous fight was to come, but the Parnell movement was ended. The wonderful comet whizzed through the Irish firmament for another year, but it had lost its light, and it only alarmed beholders by its uncanny visitations.

CHAPTER L.

DAVITT LEADS THE ATTACK.

DAVITT was the one prominent Irish politician who saw clearly from the very beginning that a guilty Parnell was an impossible Irish leader. True, he may not have perceived that

Parnell's ruin meant, almost of necessity, the ruin of Ireland's cause for the time being, but he did fully appreciate the fact that the chief could no longer command the unity of the nationalists and would alienate an essential section of the English democracy. He sounded the tocsin in the *Labour World*, and for his pains felt a bitter jibe delivered at the Leinster Hall meeting by one who became Parnell's most rancorous foe. Davitt was sore at what he considered Parnell's deception. He had made himself responsible, rather foolishly, for the news that the chief would again overcome the machinations of his enemies, but there was no personal resentment in his protest. Davitt, perhaps, comes with cleanest hands through the whole unsavoury crisis. No one could accuse him of having become a slave to the Liberal alliance. Indeed that charge, now copiously levelled, came with the worst possible grace from the lips of Parnell. It is possible to prove from his speeches that he was as intimately addicted to that alliance as any one of his followers. His speech at the Eighty Club on May 8, 1888, was a case in point. No guest could have been more graceful and grateful towards his hosts, nor was it merely the politeness of good breeding. He acknowledged that he valued the honour for its effect in Ireland, and said it would remind the Irish people that they were not alone in their struggle, and that they would be more than ever impressed with the necessity of doing nothing to damage the position and the power of their allies in England. He described the potency of these English allies in most emphatic and flattering terms.

Davitt, on the other hand, never ceased to demand benefits from the alliance. He wanted to see the allies more active in denouncing evictions in Ireland, and he refused to join in the chorus of jubilation over a theoretical friendship. "Soft words," he cried, "from even English Home Rulers, don't butter Irish parsnips. My experience of the Liberal Party would not incline me to be over-enthusiastic in its behalf. Half the vehement indignation which characterised the Bulgarian atrocity agitation would curb Balfour's underlings. I think we have gone ridiculously far in praising everything Gladstonian. I maintain, and I don't care who is pleased or displeased, that most of the evils inflicted upon us by Tory rule since 1866 are on account of the alliance between Mr. Gladstone's following and that of Mr. Parnell. The alliance had been a handcuff holding our people defenceless."

Not once but many times he struck this strident note. He was censured by *United Ireland* for his attitude, and Parnell himself rapped him over the knuckles. "I have no right to

conceal from my critics the fact," he confessed, "that Mr. Parnell has spoken to me more strongly than anyone else for my remarks about Mr. Gladstone and his party."

Parnell now transferred the fight to Irish soil. There is reason to believe that he was misinformed as to feeling in Ireland. He had one advantage. The great nationalist newspaper, the *Freeman's Journal*, declared for his leadership. His opponents were for the moment without any rival organ in the press. On the other hand, the Seceders, as he cleverly styled them, brought with them the best brains and stoutest purses in the party. The fierce war which he waged for ten fearful months in Ireland he conducted almost single-handed and upon slender financial resources. Even the *Freeman's Journal* deserted towards the close, and in his last frenzied days he was forced to begin founding a newspaper to voice his cause.

It was doubtless his intention to appeal to the Irish in person at the earliest possible moment, but in any event the Seceders left him no option. The leading spirits amongst them, the moment they recognised that it was to be a fight to a finish, acted with the most confident energy and with a sagacity which had been woefully lacking in the earlier days of crisis. There was a Parliamentary vacancy in Kilkenny. The Seceders entered the House on Monday, December 8, under the leadership of Mr. Justin McCarthy, and moved for the issue of a new writ. This was throwing down the gage of battle with a vengeance, but under the circumstances it was the proper thing to do. The following day Parnell crossed over to Dublin, and on the night of December 10 he began his last campaign in Ireland. Those who were in the Rotunda that night are never likely to forget the scene. Not a tenth of those who clamoured and struggled frantically to gain admission were able to effect their purpose. A sweltering and excited audience packed to suffocation two of the halls within the building, and in the streets outside a huge concourse in all stages of enthusiasm awaited the arrival of the chief. It did, indeed, seem at that moment as if he were destined to win another of those personal triumphs over formidable combinations of foes of which his career had been an almost continuous series.

His appearance was in keeping with the occasion. Since I had last seen him in 1885 he had aged perceptibly. He seemed far more than his four and forty years, but he was still erect and pliant, and in the excitement of his tempestuous welcome looked every inch a first-class fighting man. He was less studied in his attire than formerly. His face

was paler, his hair more meagre, and it was unkempt and long at the back, curling slightly over his collar. He was thin. His features were those of a man who had been recently sick. That he was excited was evident, but he still gave evidence of that unconquerable self-command which was so marked a feature of his personality. His eyes glistened with fire and feeling. He spoke with fluency, yet with deliberation. His voice sounded with thrilling clearness. He put passionate vehemence into some of his words. He hissed others in a note of scathing defiance. There was a splendid confidence in his tone. He was unusually lavish of gesture. He had rarely spoken with more impressive effect. He never kindled greater enthusiasm. From that night to the day of his death Dublin was at his feet, and never for a moment wearied of her servitude. He spoke twice, and raised the issue to which he clung to the end—was Ireland to take her orders from an English Minister and an English political party? He claimed that never in thought or word or deed had he been false to Ireland, and he made that appeal to the young men of the capital and the country which became a constant feature of his campaign. But the most affecting part of his speech was that in which he prayed his fellow-countrymen to allow him to enter the promised land with them. Orator has seldom given voice to pathos more sublime, for he was fully conscious of his physical disabilities, and he must have doubted whether his strength would carry him, however smooth and short the way.

Next morning at the head of a body of intrepid followers, he stormed the offices of *United Ireland*, for the moment in hostile hands, and installed a new editor and staff. When the storming party arrived the building was locked and bolted, and Parnell himself wielding a crowbar, which was fetched from some paviors in the street, belaboured the door till it yielded. The attack was short and decisive, and heightened the Parnellite fever in the city. After this *coup de main* he hurried to Cork, and again he was received with boundless enthusiasm. He stuck to the issue he had chosen, denounced English dictation, and to all appearances carried the populace with him. But the populace were not the register of voters, either in Cork or elsewhere.

It was noted in Cork that he had begun to show signs of fatigue and illness. There was little wonder. He had gone through a fierce ordeal, and he must have seen that a fiercer was before him. Yet when he spoke during those days he showed neither weakness, weariness, nor despondency. No one could listen to him without being convinced of his sin-

cerity. When he raised the cry, "No dictation from an English statesman," he did so in accents which assured great numbers of his countrymen that he was not endeavouring to draw a red herring across the track, and the fact seems to be that he was always perhaps inordinately suspicious of Gladstone. There is an incident, as far as I know never before published, which indicates as much. In 1887, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, conceived the idea of asking subscriptions for the erection of a statue of Gladstone in the metropolis. The Grand Old Man was in the full ecstasy of his new enthusiasm, and was indeed carrying the standard of Home Rule with all the ardour of the convert. But this question of a statue required caution. Mr. P. J. Meade, one of the principal members of the literary staff of the *Freeman's Journal*, and a friend of Parnell's, was sent to Avondale to consult him on the subject. It was a bleak, cold day, and Mr. Meade, failing to find him at Avondale, had to search in the direction of the iron mines at Shillelagh, from which this extraordinary man could never keep his mind for long. He was found at last. He was muffled up, and wore a cap with flaps down about his ears. He looked very ill, but he listened with that conquering affability which was one of his best weapons. But he said nothing. They entered the train for Rathdrum, and Mr. Meade, despairing of a reply, pressed him to say something on the proposal. "Well, Mr. Meade," was all that could be extracted, "Mr. Gladstone deserves a monument in Dublin at this moment, but remember this, we may have to fight the old man yet."

The Kilkenny election attracted the eyes of the world. There were, of course, two candidates, but they were, as Davitt called them, "accidents." The real candidates were Parnell and Gladstone. For the first time in the great struggle, which was not to end even with Parnell's death, the worn and seedy issue of "the priest in politics" was raised, and it demands a word in passing. Parnell himself sedulously avoided it. It was, indeed, an issue which did not consort with his Conservative temperament, and he was too practical a politician to attach importance to it at that juncture. He knew the exact value of the influence which the Irish priest wields in political affairs and how greatly entitled he is to wield it. He also knew from his own career and experience that it is only powerful and decisive when it is in consonance with the aspirations and the necessities of the people. He had seen how futile was ecclesiastical opposition when he first stood as candidate for Cork. He

had learned a similar lesson from the triumph of the Tribute. In political affairs he was one of the most reasonable of men. He knew why clerical influence had failed on those occasions, and he knew why it was as likely to be as potent now as it had been powerless then. He was perfectly ready to recognise that there was now a good cause for the opposition of the priests, and a sound reason why their advice would not be lightly set aside. "I do not blame the people for following the priests," he said; "it is natural, but the priests are not good political guides." That was certainly restraint, considering how powerful a factor they were in his discomfiture. He never railed against the interference of the priest in politics, nor will anybody who knows much about the history of statesmanship and law or who values a sense of responsibility in public affairs.

To Parnell's side came the remnants of Fenianism, but Parnell had himself broken the spell of Fenianism. He had taught Ireland that constitutional agitation was the way to political success, and although the extreme men gave him what help they could, they spoke a dialect almost obsolete in rural Ireland. Besides, Davitt, who threw himself into the contest with characteristic elan and the most ardent determination, greatly neutralised their efforts. After all, he had been as good a Fenian as any, and had suffered more than most of them for his Fenianism. When Parnell made his insidious appeals to the young men, the sublime convict of Dartmoor denounced "the criminal folly" of leading them "to face the might of England in the field," and then Parnell retorted that his appeal and his position were precisely the same as when he stood at Cork in '80. He would try to win by constitutional means, and he had hopes, as long as he could keep together an independent Irish Party, but when success should appear impossible that way, he would take counsel with his fellow-countrymen as to the next step.

The two heroes encountered each other at Castlecomer. Davitt had been first in the district, and soon established himself in favour with the miners of the coalfields. Parnell entered the town one fair-day. It was a cold December. He went to the house of Dr. Hanlon. Pulling off his boots, he pulled a chair to the fire, and put his heels on the fire-place, Yankee fashion. Suddenly Bennett Burleigh, the well-known war correspondent, burst into the room with a message from Davitt, to the effect that the two of them should address the same meeting, and that Davitt would guarantee a fair and full hearing to Parnell. The chief was not in very

good humour, and he treated the messenger brusquely. "None of your damned prevarication with me," he had said when Mr. William Redmond came in with a very similar story. "William Redmond," he then added, "tell Mick Davitt I have never asked his leave, and I never will, for liberty to address my fellow-countrymen as to where or when I will." Ten years before, at the riotous meeting in Enniscorthy, when someone proffered to obtain a hearing for him from the hostile crowd, he had rejected the offer in almost the self-same scornful words.

Parnell was now on his feet, and all for action. A wagonette was ordered out, and the chief and his followers drove towards the place where Davitt was waiting. The crowd was bitterly hostile. Davitt had been assailed at the village of Ballinakill, and his followers were enraged. But Parnell faced the mob without a quiver, and making his voice sound clear and shrill above the din, spoke his speech in spite of violence and clamour. A dastardly outrage disgraced the day and the town. A bag of whiting was thrown at him, and some of it entered his eye. Some of his principal opponents afterwards made light of the injury, and almost accused him of shamming because he kept the injured organ bandaged, but the only ground for those discreditable aspersions was a telegram which Parnell himself had caused to be sent to allay the apprehensions of the unhappy woman whose lot was so unfortunately mixed up with his own. He was, in fact, very badly injured, and suffered extreme pain.

For ten turbulent days the fight lasted. It ended in a defeat that would have crushed any other politician. By almost two to one, his first direct appeal to a body of Irish electors was rejected. That verdict was never reversed. Though Parnell had already proclaimed his intention of carrying on the struggle from constituency to constituency, he probably now saw for the first time how meagre were his chances of success. But it was too late to draw back. Davitt thought he might accept the inevitable. Parnell noticed him as he was indulging this speculating. "He looks very uncomfortable," he remarked. "Well," replied Mr. Barry O'Brien, "Davitt is not opposing you at the bidding of Mr. Gladstone. He took his line before Gladstone spoke." "Yes," said Parnell, looking at Davitt, "that is true, and he has suffered, too." However they may have differed, the chief always had a high opinion of the character of the tribune, whom he described, with evident sincerity, as "a man of honour and remarkable courage, who had never shrunk from the consequences of his words and acts."

CHAPTER LI.

THE DARK HOUSE.

FROM the day when the poll was declared in Kilkenny City the last phase of the chief's final campaign begins. The night before Christmas Eve he returned to Dublin, and was welcomed back more effusively than if he had been the victor. A great procession escorted him through the streets, with bands and torches. He was brought past the old Parliament House, and as he came in sight of the historic building, within which his illustrious ancestor had borne himself proudly untarnished amid temptation and corruption, he rose in the carriage and led the fierce cheers of the multitude. The great and unfortunate leader, bare-headed, with a dark bandage over his eye, pointing to the goal of the nation's efforts, was a spectacle to thrill the spirit of the capital. He kept his flag flying for nine months more. There were interruptions and short breathing spaces, two contested elections and negotiations in France, but for the most part the struggle consisted of a grand speaking tour through Ireland, week after week, and month after month, conducted with all the persistent vehemence and frantic energy, with all the resourcefulness and agility which characterised the great campaign of 1881. Parnell, though at death's door, seemed to have become young again. There were those who said that had he been spared a little longer this indomitable activity and his magnetic personality would have turned the tables on his opponents. It might have been so, but one or two circumstances deserve to be remembered. He had not indeed neglected the Irish cause to any appreciable degree, his spasmodic remissness had no sensibly disadvantageous effect even in Parliament, largely, no doubt, because of the efficiency of his brigade; but he had neglected Ireland from his own personal point of view. He who had once been so familiar to vast numbers of his compatriots was now making the acquaintance of thousands of them for the first time. He had allowed his appearances before them to become few and far between for some years past, but this would not have made so much difference but for the fact that in the meanwhile a furious national campaign had been initiated and controlled by other men who had become heroes in his absence. It was perhaps this that he meant when he said he always knew the Plan of Campaign would end badly. The dictator

must never for a moment cease to dictate; the political chief must never let others lead; the national leader cannot afford to be an absentee. The spell of his personality was lost in Ireland: he found himself compelled to recommence its imposition on those in whose hands his fate now rested.

Such men as Messrs. O'Brien, and Dillon and Davitt had, on the contrary, never dropped out of the routine of Irish political life. Their influence was greater than ever. Davitt, no doubt, was at moments unpopular because of a versatility which was occasionally disturbing in a movement which demanded unity, but his personal character stood very high, and he had done tremendous service before the Special Commission. His position in this attack upon Parnell revealed the weakness of his political theory, and the superficial character of his political thinking. The seceders had something that at any rate looked tangible to put before the people. They had the Liberal Alliance and a certain Home Rule Bill, amongst other benefits around which their rhetoric and invective could caper. But Davitt ran on different lines. In the middle of the fight he expressed his regret that after so many years of struggle the country should be asked to put aside the glorious word nationalism and to take up the word Parnellism in its place. He confessed he had striven for years to reverse that condition of things and to make the national will of Ireland supreme in the national organisation. That was Davitt's way. He would always begin at the goal if he had his way. He saw the end clearer than the means. He never lacked a hiatus. Nationalisation of land was to be exploited while evictions were in full swing. He appealed to a national will before the nation could even call its soul its own. He completely ignored the fact that Parnell was for many years the national will, and that the nation had had no other; in a word, that Parnell was the unity without which the nation might wail until it was black in the face without obtaining even a particle of its desire. Mr. Tim Healy was an abler politician and a deeper thinker. "I refuse," he said at the Leinster Hall meeting, "to take the cork out of the soda water bottle in order to see the fizz."

Messrs. Dillon and O'Brien returned from America, took up their quarters in France—to escape arrest—and inaugurated what came to be known as the Boulogne negotiations. The object was to induce Parnell to retire on terms. What Parnell thought of the interlude may be conceived from the fact that scarcely for a single week did he suspend his campaign in Ireland. It is doubtful if some of the leading seceders looked with favour on the enterprise, but Mr. O'Brien's im-

petuous optimism survived for nine or ten days. None of those involved was a match for the wily and perhaps not over-scrupulous diplomat whom they were trying to conciliate, and it is not worth while speculating whether he ever intended to give away an inch. At all events, he again took his stand on the question of the good faith of the Liberal leaders, and by moving the pawns with industrious adroitness he made any accommodation impossible.

Before the by-play at Boulogne had finished he had already addressed large gatherings at Limerick, Tralee, Athlone, Waterford, Arklow, Ennis, Roscommon, Strokestown, Navan, Newry, Galway and Drogheda, besides meetings at Dublin and Cork. Scarcely a Sunday passed without his voice being heard in some part of the island. He crossed and recrossed the Channel with the restless vigour of a Vanderdecken, and that although cautioned against the effect upon his health. "I am doing the work of ten men," he remarked, "but I feel right well. It does me good." His whole effort was to pin his opponents and the entire country to the single issue. "Who caused this strife?" he asked at Limerick. Loud shouts answered, "Healy." "Oh no," he assured them, "it was not any Irishman": and their voices called out, "Gladstone." That was exactly what he wanted to enforce: "Gladstone and Stead and every miserable old woman in England desirous of airing his virtue had interfered."

Two seats fell vacant, unfortunately for the chief. In April an election became necessary in Sligo and another in Carlow in July. These were contests the seceders welcomed, for they adjudged rightly that they held the classes who had votes. He was beaten in these constituencies, but he showed no sign of despair. "We shall form a rallying square," he exclaimed, "around the flag of Irish Independence."

On June 26, 1891, he married Mrs. O'Shea at the Registry Office in Steyning. Two days later he celebrated his forty-fifth birthday. It seems that arrangements were made to have the civil followed some time later by a religious ceremonial, but difficulties intervened, and the intention was never carried out. He was still in his prime as statesmen go, but death was closing in upon him. The desertion of the *Freeman's Journal* to the side of his foes was a bad blow. He had nothing now but a weekly organ in the Irish Press; and he bent his mind to the task of establishing a new daily journal, and pushed on the project with speed and determination.

He announced this enterprise when speaking to a large

crowd from the window of a small hotel in O'Connell Street, Dublin, directly opposite the spot where his statue by Saint Gaudens now stands; but he did not live to see it accomplished. The campaign grew more and more rancorous as the months passed on. He was sometimes assailed with a coarse and vicious ribaldry in speech and in print. He replied as well as a dying man could to "the snarling jackals" growling round the camp fires. It was a period of public squalor which stains indelibly the history of Ireland. He himself still often displayed some of his most amiable and attractive characteristics. He took a kindly care of others. With some of his former colleagues, notably with Mr. Justin M'Carthy, he remained on friendly terms all through. In September the two old comrades sat together the night long. It was the last time they ever met. "He telegraphed from Brighton to me," writes Mr. M'Carthy, "asking if he could come and see me at eleven o'clock that night. He came accordingly and waited until half-past three, and kept his cab at the door all the while, then drove off to Euston to go by the early mail train to Ireland. We had to discuss all manner of details about bills of costs for registration and such like, incurred while the party was still united, and which can only be paid out of funds for which he and I are joint trustees. He was as friendly and familiar as if nothing whatever had occurred to divide us, and we smoked at intervals of work and drank whiskey and soda, and I thought it dismal, ghastly and hideous, and I hate to have to meet him. But there is no help for it, and I dare say I shall have to meet him again this week."

His reticence passed off from him these months. He did not like to be left alone. He would talk far into the night. He has walked backwards and forwards across Dublin at night for the sake of keeping a friend near him. An unusual pallor crept into his face. He looked weary and sick. When he rose to address a meeting, however, his energy was sometimes superb. He would literally throw off his overcoat, and as his clear, piercing voice spoke his characteristic exordium, "Men of Dublin," "Men of Tipperary," he seemed the old leader again. Even during the clustering troubles of the split he kept hammering away at his iron mines and quarries. One day Mr. Standish O'Grady met him on his way to inspect the borings. He was huddled up in rugs and cloaks and shawls, but he warmed to the subject of mining, on which, says our informant, "he was almost cracked." "His boyish enthusiasm about these holes had something in it half-diverting, half-pathetic. Though he was most communica-

tive, I felt instinctively the singular 'withdrawnness' of the man, something suggestive of a mind remote and solitary. Fastidiously polite and courteous himself, I fancy he was one with whom it was impossible to take a liberty, and even that a manner which would not be a liberty with men of the most perfect breeding would be a liberty with him." Finally, "there was the pallor of death in his worn and hollow face."

Many villages and towns and cities he spoke to that summer. He prepared to carry on the fight through the autumn. His marvellous will-power enabled him to simulate strength and vigour, so that the deep furrows in the face appeared to his followers nothing more than fatigue, and indeed he had gone through a giant's work. But inwardly he must have been torn and racked. He wrote to his mother: "I am weary, dear mother, of these troubles, weary unto death; but it is all in a good cause. With health and the assistance of my friends I am confident of the result."

He arrived in Dublin on Saturday, September 26, to attend next day a meeting at Creggs, a village in Roscommon. He was ill and suffering great pain from rheumatism in the left arm. A devoted friend and colleague, Dr. Joseph Kenny, saw him and asked him not to make the journey into the far bleak West. He was not to be turned from his purpose. He travelled down, wearing his arm in a sling. All along he talked about the new paper he was about founding. He was sure of its success. Next day, Sunday, he took care of the reporter of the *Freeman's Journal* lest some in the crowd might attack him. He was very ill. It was a cold, wet day. Some one raised an umbrella over him when he began to speak, but he put it away. He spoke for a long time in the rain. His speech was a laboured effort. By a strange coincidence his thoughts evidently turned to death "If I had taken the advice of my doctor," he said, "I should have gone to bed when I arrived in Dublin, but if I had done that my enemies would be throwing up their hats and announcing that I was dead before I was buried." He travelled back to Dublin the following day. He insisted on one of the reporters travelling with him. They chatted all the way. When he reached the city he drove to Dr. Kenny's residence, and stopped there three days. On September 30 he attended a meeting in connection with the newspaper, and was so weak that brandy had to be given to him. Dr. Kenny urged him not to cross the Channel. But he would. "I shall come back next Saturday week," he promised. He travelled by the night boat, often a trying experience at that time of the

year even for a robust man. When he reached his house, 10 Walsingham Terrace, Brighton, he complained of chill. He was urged to send for Sir Henry Thompson, his doctor, but put it off saying he would see how he felt in the morning. He complained of having had to sit for some hours in damp clothes after the meeting at Creggs, his bag having been taken away by mistake. He said he would not go out again till he was well. Even money matters appear to have been worrying him. He spoke about some mortgage. He was helped to bed, but could not sleep. He was again advised to send for a doctor. He said he would rather write to Sir Henry Thompson. A suggestion was made to telegraph for him. He objected that the expense would be enormous at that distance. Then his thoughts turned to Ireland. The sufferings of the peasants filled his brain. The pain he was suffering made him think and speak of the damp hovels in which they lived. After his death it was given out that his last words were bombast about sending love to his colleagues and the Irish people. It was just tawdry journalism invented for the occasion. He said a greater and a more memorable and inspiring thing. This night as he lay awake he murmured: "I wish I could do something for them—the Irish peasantry. They are worth helping. I have always wished it, but there is so much between, and they suffer in silence." Poor fellow, he had rescued them from feudalism. What more could he have done? That was the last time the Irish crossed his lips.

In the morning, October 3, he was better, and unfortunately refused to send for Sir Henry Thompson. He ate well, smoked, made notes for a speech. On Sunday he was bad again. He had written about his illness to Sir Henry, but he agreed to call in a local doctor. He did not sleep well that night, and he was worried with a superstition that if he did not sleep two nights consecutively he would die. He became feverish, and during the following day he was in great pain. A reply from Sir Henry had, however, reassured him. A delirium seized him. He thought he was being held down. He was very weak, but tried to get out of bed. Then he became quite calm and spoke of the sunny land where he would go when he was better. "We will be so happy," he said to his wife, "there are so many things happier than politics." Another sleepless night. In the morning he was again feverish. A high colour suffused his cheeks. He would not let his dog be taken from the room. "Let old Grouse stay," he said, "I like him there." The doctor saw him twice that day, Tuesday, October 6. There was no improvement.

Towards nightfall he dozed. He was heard to mutter : " The Conservative Party." Late in the evening he opened his eyes. He asked his wife to kiss him : said " I will try to sleep a little " : his eyes sparkled for a moment ; he sighed, became unconscious. The doctor was hurriedly called. He detected a sudden attack at the heart. Remedies were instantly applied. But Parnell was to awaken no more. The tired shadows vanished from his features, and his noble face wore a peaceful look in death. It was a stormy night, the rain beat against the windows, and the wind tore round the sides of the big, lonely, desolate house facing the sea. Next day the startling news amazed the country. At first there was blank incredulity, then were heard horrid whispers of suicide. For many a day no small number of people believed that the chief still lived and would reappear. The stupefaction of the country has only one parallel. As France felt at the sight of Mirabeau's coffin Ireland felt at the news of Parnell's death.

CHAPTER LII.

THE LONG SLEEP.

WHILE Parnell was speaking his last speech at Creggs, Davitt, at Chicago, was foretelling the future of Irish politics. He had no disposition to introduce the unfortunate domestic trouble in Irish politics among his countrymen in America, he assured a newsman who interviewed him, adding : " We will settle that in Ireland at the next general election, and when it is settled it will leave Parnell out of Irish politics, for he will not win a single seat." Davitt would have believed anything that was sufficiently sanguine. But Parnell was his own prophet. " I tell you, fellow-countrymen," he said at the first meeting of his last campaign, " that when the day comes for measuring the amount of my shortcomings and the amount of my opponents' shortcomings the balance will not be against me." That at all events was fulfilled to the letter.

The body of the mighty leader was carried to Ireland and buried amid splendid mourning on Sunday, October 11, 1891. That morning, in a storm of rain and sea, it was landed at Kingstown, brought to the city and to the ancient church of St. Michan, where a venerable rector read the prayers of the Protestant Church appropriate to the solemn occasion. It

then lay in state in the rotunda of the City Hall, in front of Hogan's powerful statue of the Liberator, while sad and silent myriads walked round the catafalque. Later in the day a huge mass of men marched with the coffin to Glasnevin. Dusk had gathered round the throng when the cemetery was reached. As the chief was laid in the grave a strange meteor flamed in the sky and lightened the scene of sorrow.

"When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

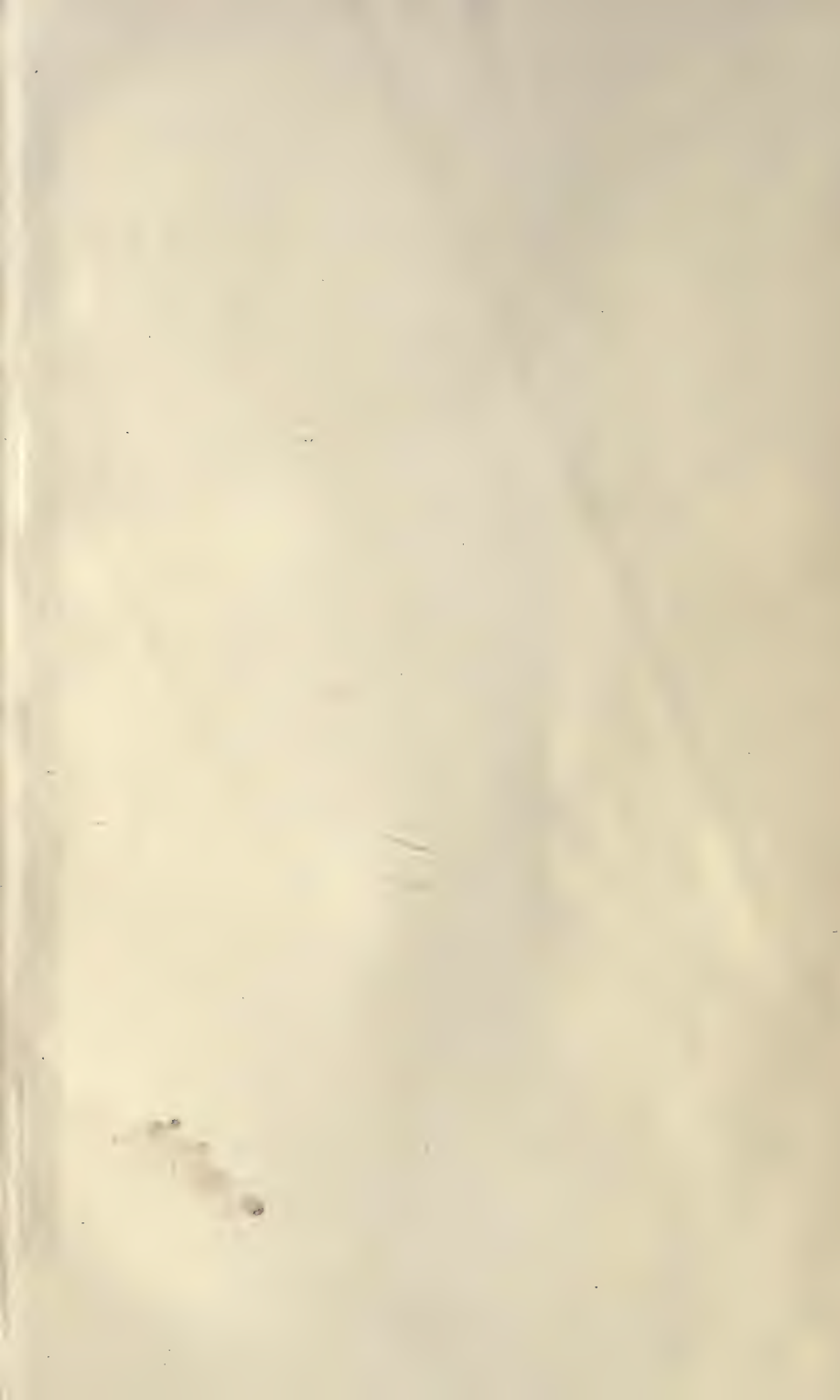
Parnell lived a year too long. Had he died after his victory over *The Times* his career would have been perhaps the most extraordinary in the history of politics and statesmanship. His success had become a proverb with his party. He was regarded as lucky to an uncanny degree. His colleagues believed him almost inspired. "He's like a cat," said Biggar, "he always lands on his feet." His career was fifteen years of continuous and uninterrupted victory, one year of disaster, and then death. There were some who imagined that with his end the rival nationalist parties in Ireland would sink their differences, but those who thought so had not appreciated the meaning of Parnell as a unifying influence. It was only after his death that faction and passion really ran riot. Mr. Justin M'Carthy had foreseen "hopeless discord," and few men were better entitled to prophesy about the matter. How good a prophet he was is evident from his letters to Mrs. Campbell Praed. The dictator had been struck down, and now the chairman of the seceders "was begining to realise that Home Rule would not come unless the strong man should come to rule also." Davitt's beautiful dream of the end of one man power was found in reality to mean the beginning of no man power. One man worship was followed by total iconoclasm.

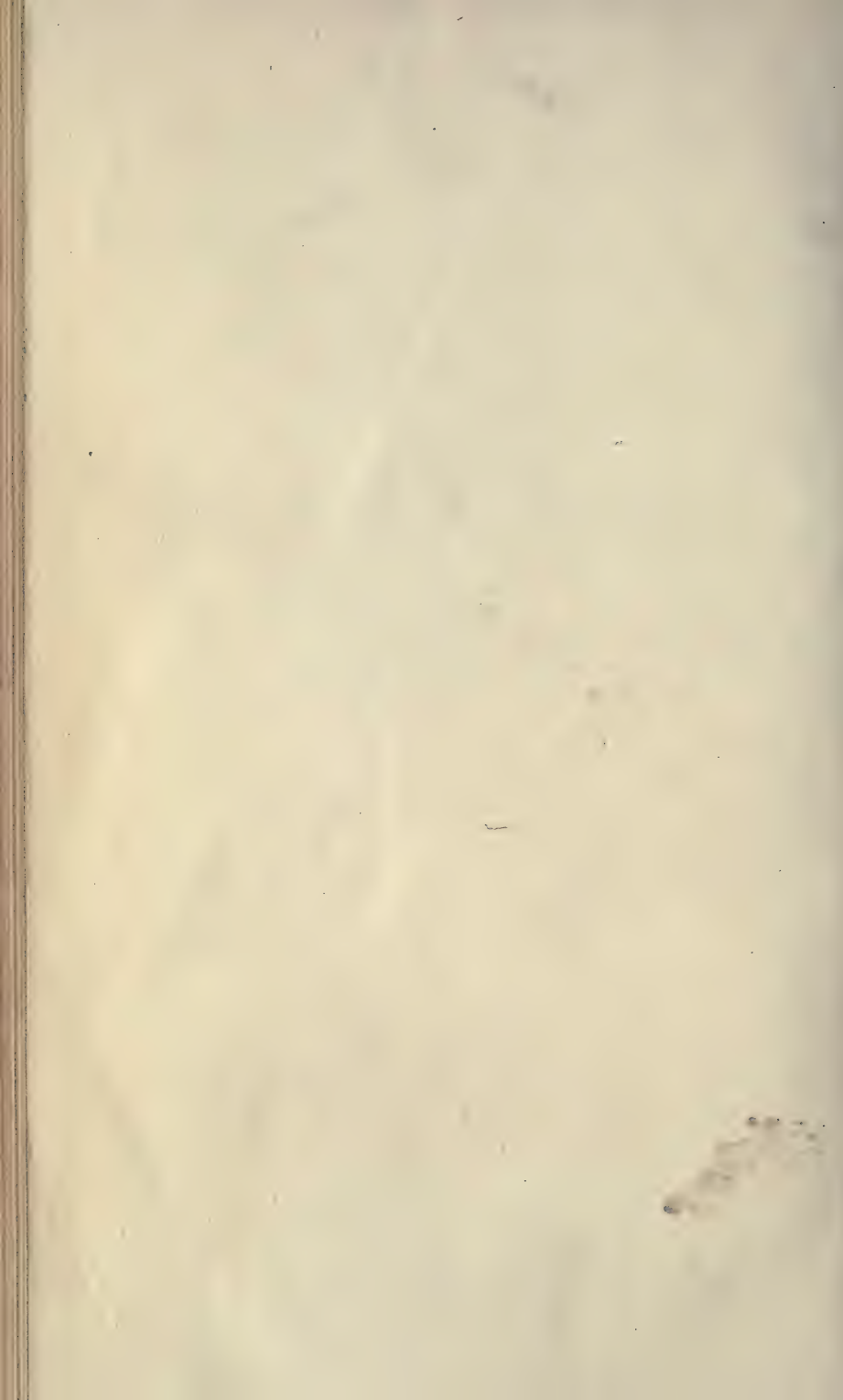
It is far easier to estimate the services and effect of Parnell's career than to analyse his methods and his character. If any Irishman now alive should live to witness the opening of an Irish Parliament, and it is very likely, he must thank Parnell and Parnell alone for it. It is not the making of self-government inevitable that must be attributed to him. It is easy to see that in the process of political evolution, owing to what Mr. Cecil Jane would call the action and reaction of political forces, the extension of national government to Ireland had become an inevitable development. What Parnell did was to expedite its arrival beyond all possible anticipation or expectation. He was the first Irishman

who played the game of high politics on something like equal terms with the best exponents England could produce. He was a pre-eminently sane statesman, and by pinning down his forces to the attainment of the practical he made more progress in fifteen years than had been made in the previous seventy-five. He imparted his own concentration of thought and purpose to his fellow-countrymen. Few practical men have had so many attributes of the seer. His clarity and sureness of vision, his penetration of difficulties, his estimation of effects, his anticipation of the future were wonderful and almost unailing. Irishmen had never listened to such oratory as his; devoid of rhetoric yet instinct with fine and fiery feeling; unembellished, yet turning practical questions and prosaic details into topics of irresistible interest and attractiveness; epigrammatical without being artificial; homely without being commonplace; strong without being vulgar; eloquent without being ornate. Never was common-sense clothed in such engaging and effective apparel. No Irishman has ever exercised a more important and a more beneficial effect on the habits of thought and speech of vast numbers of his countrymen.

"Parnell," said Gladstone in 1897, "was the most remarkable man I ever met. I do not say the ablest man; I say the most remarkable and the most interesting. He was an intellectual phenomenon." "Parnell," said Cecil Rhodes, "was the most reasonable and sensible man I ever met." "Very remarkable," said Chamberlain. "A great man. I have often thought Parnell was like Napoleon." Others thought so too. The rapid rise, and the even more rapid and dismal fall, so similar in the case of each, may have attracted some to the comparison. But they had characteristics very much alike. Both had an extraordinary grip on practical affairs, and yet both were filled with superstitions. To physical fear both were strangers, but they had fears of another order, and yielded to them. They were both sensual, though no one would dream of placing the Irishman on the great Corsican's level in this respect. They were terse, silent men. Both were masters of the short harangue. They were incomparable epigrammatists. Each of them had moments of extraordinary detachment when he seemed to be utterly unconscious of his surroundings, and when his eyes became vacant or covered with a haze of thought. Both could put forth the fiercest energy, physical and mental, when they willed. Both were cautious and daring, and knew with bewildering exactness when risks could be taken and how far they should be pursued. Both learned swiftly. They

were both narrow in their literary tastes and acquirements. Both had a passion for the concrete, and for mechanics. Both had the art of making the very most of small forces and materials. Both were first-rate judges of men. They were suspicious and cold, but could be delightfully affable when they chose. They combined suavity with firmness. When success and health failed, each of them shed his reticence. When Napoleon began to delegate his functions, his failures commenced. It was so with Parnell too. Both were niggardly in money matters. In some physical characteristics they were also alike. Everybody admired the beauty of Napoleon's hands. No one who clasped them could ever forget the exquisite softness of Parnell's. Their heads were modelled on beautiful lines. Their features were faultlessly regular. But after all such comparisons are scarcely ever more than ingenious. Parnell might have said, as did Napoleon: "It is I who closed the crater of anarchy and brought order out of chaos." And like him too he left in a sense confusion worse confounded. But all great men of action have something in common, and the achievements of many of them are singularly similar. Perhaps the truest thing that can be said of each of these two is that he was a dictator whose dictatorship was indispensable.







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O'Hara, M. M.
Chief and tribune

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